

# **United States Department of the Interior**

## **Integrated Charge Card Program Guidelines**

### **Chapter 1 Integrated Charge Card Program Overview**

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#### **1.1 Integrated Charge Card Program - Introduction**

##### **A. What is the purpose of the following guidelines?**

These guidelines establish policy and procedures for the use of the Department of the Interior (DOI) integrated charge card for official purchase, travel and/or fleet related transactions.

##### **B. What is the effective date of the guidelines?**

The guidelines are effective upon issuance and supersede the United States Department of the Interior Integrated Charge Card Guidelines of November 1998.

##### **C. Which DOI office is responsible for issuing the guidelines, and how can I obtain additional guideline copies?**

The Office of Acquisition and Property Management, in cooperation with the Office of Financial Management, is responsible for issuing the United States Department of the Interior Integrated Charge Card Guidelines. Please address any comments or questions regarding the guidelines to:

Director, Office of Acquisition and Property Management, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240.

Copies of the guidelines may be obtained by accessing the Office of Acquisition and Property Management's Charge Card web page at the following site:

<http://www.doi.gov/pam/charge.html>

## **1.2 Integrated Charge Card Program Goals and Scope**

### **A. What is an integrated charge card, and what are the goals of the DOI's integrated charge card program?**

Where separate charge cards were previously required and used, each for their respective purpose, i.e., support of purchase, travel, or fleet requirements, an integrated charge card system allows a cardholder to use *a single* card to conduct official business in multiple lines. For example, under the DOI's integrated charge card program, cardholders may be authorized to use one, two, or all three business lines on a single charge card, as applicable. In addition to integrated accounts allowing for both central and individual billing of transactions, the integrated system also enables a single application process and a single method for recording transactions in the finance system.

The goals of the DOI's integrated card program are to: improve mission support, streamline and standardize operations, increase card use by maximizing card acceptance for all types of transactions, reduce administrative costs, and outsource transaction processing.

### **B. Is use of the DOI integrated charge card mandatory for all DOI organizations and employees? If so, for which business lines?**

Yes, use of the DOI integrated charge card is mandatory. Under the General Services Administration's (GSA's) SmartPay Charge Card Program, DOI selected Bank of America as its integrated card issuer and MasterCard (MC) as the card brand to be used. With limited exceptions applicable only to the fleet (i.e., vehicles in the GSA Interagency Fleet Management System (see section 2.2.C of this guideline)) and travel (see sections 5.2.A - C of this guideline) business lines, the DOI integrated charge card is mandatory for charge card purchase, travel and fleet business transactions. Bank of America MC is the *only* charge card that may be used by DOI organizations and employees for their purchase, travel and fleet requirements.

## **1.3 Definitions and Acronyms**

**A. Agency:** For the purpose of this guide, *agency* means the Department of the Interior (DOI). The DOI is then further broken down to include organizations such as bureaus, offices and programs.

**B. Agency/Organization Program Coordinators (A/OPC):** Within DOI, a bureau/office's primary liaison with the charge card contractor and the Office of Acquisition and Property Management, Office of Financial Management, and National Business Center regarding technical and policy matters relating to the DOI charge card contract and bureau/office charge card use. Depending on the bureau/office, A/OPCs may work singly or be supported by bureau/office sub-coordinators (known as field or regional A/OPCs) with distinct responsibilities.

**C. Approving Official (1) (specific to employee travel)** With regard to employee travel, the designated approving official is the person with responsibility and authority to review, verify and sign a travel voucher (e.g., Block 14 SF 1012) for travel under his/her span of control; **(2) (as related to the charge card program regardless of business line)** (term can be used interchangeably with "Reviewing Official" for purposes of the DOI Integrated Charge Card Program): An individual responsible for oversight and monitoring of designated cardholders' compliance with established charge card rules and procedures.

**D. Billing Date** (Can be used interchangeably with "Closing Date." See definition for Closing Date, in section 1.3.K, below.)

**E. Business Line:** The Charge Card Program is comprised of three "business lines," i.e., purchase, travel and fleet. Each of the business lines is made up of a group of charge card activities with common functional characteristics (e.g., supports purchase, travel, or fleet). At the DOI these functions are integrated into one card and one administrative set-up. ( See the response to question 1.2.A, above, and the definition for Integrated Solution in section 1.3.T, below.)

**F. Cardholder:** **(1) (specific to fleet)** Any DOI employee, vehicle/equipment or organization designated by the Department to be issued a card for the purchase of fuel, oil, parts, service, and repairs for DOI bureau/office-owned vehicles/equipment.; **(2) (specific to purchase)** Any DOI employee designated by the Department to be issued a card to purchase goods and services and/or pay for official expenses in compliance with applicable regulations. At bureau discretion, cardholders with accounts in the purchase business line may also be issued convenience checks; **(3) (specific to travel)** A DOI employee issued a charge card for use when traveling. The card bears the employee's name and must be used by the employee to pay for official travel and travel-related expenses in compliance with applicable regulations.

Individuals working for the Department of the Interior and its bureaus/offices under Interagency Personnel Actions and employees on detail from other Federal Government agencies may be issued Bank of America - DOI charge cards in the *travel* business line subject to any limitations deemed appropriate by the DOI bureau/office. In doing so, DOI bureaus and offices must ensure that the cards are canceled upon expiration of the detail period.

**G. Cardholder Account:** An account established in a single or multiple business lines for an authorized employee or entity (e.g., for purposes of the fleet card line, an account can be established for a motor vehicle, equipment, boats, small airplanes) against which charges can be made.

**H. Card Account Number:** An external means of identifying a specific customer unit or a specific card, e.g., the number embossed on the face of a charge card. DOI Bank of America account numbers are 16-digit numbers that begin with 5568 16 for cards issued to individuals and 5568 86 for cards issued to vehicles, motorized equipment, or single purpose purchase cards, such as the Bureau of Land Management's uniform cards.

**I. Cardholder Agreement:** The "Agreement Between the Department of the Interior Employee and Bank of America," hereafter referred to as Bank of America Cardholder Agreement. The agreement formally documents and assigns the Bank's and cardholders' responsibilities regarding use of the charge card for official purchase, travel, and fleet charges. By signing the integrated card account setup/application form for the Department of the Interior, activating, signing, or using the card and/or account, a cardholder agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement.

**J. Centrally Billed Transactions:** Charge card transactions billed directly to, and paid by a bureau or office. These include all purchases, convenience checks, fleet transactions, Temporary Duty (TDY) travel transportation charges, Travel Management Center fees, parking, taxis and other ground transportation, rental car and associated fuel expenses. All centrally billed transactions will appear on cardholders' Statements of Account as an "M" or "Memo Item." That is, the full detail of the centrally billed transaction will appear, but it will be paid directly by the cardholder's bureau or office. (See also definition for Individually Billed Transactions in 1.3.S., below.) All charges which are centrally billed will identify the employee who incurred the charge.

**K. Closing Date** (Can be used interchangeably with "Billing Date"): The last date for which charges appear, or can appear (i.e., in cases where no transactions were made during a cycle) on a Statement of Account.

**L. Convenience Check:** A Bank of America-issued check that may be written on an approved cardholder *purchase* account within established dollar limits. The check will show the bureau name, cardholder's name, office address, and a "not to exceed" amount. Bureaus/offices may only use convenience checks as a method of payment for transactions where the vendor will not accept MasterCard, for emergencies related to fire fighting and rescue, and for other approved purposes that comply with the Debt Collection Improvement Act and the Departmental policy contained in Financial Administration Memorandum 98-034, dated December 17, 1998. (Access FAM 98-034 at the Office of Financial Management's policy web site:

<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/policy.html>.) Convenience check transactions will be posted on cardholder statements of account and in EAGLS. Convenience checks are not available through, nor can they be used for, requirements in the travel or fleet business lines.

**M. “Corporate” Account:** Applicable to the travel business line only, a corporate account is a means of purchasing transportation tickets for individuals who have a need for transportation services but do not have a travel business line account. This includes invitational travelers, interviewees, new employees with immediate travel requirements, and employees serving without an appointment. Travel expenses of contractors and subsistence expenses (lodging and Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE)) of employees may not be charged to the corporate account. Corporate accounts can only be established by bureaus/offices (and authorized employees), and not by the individual traveler. A corporate account is not an actual plastic charge card. Rather, it is an established account against which transportation charges can be made.

**N. Electronic Account Government Ledger System (EAGLS):** Bank of America’s web-based desktop management tool which allows authorized users to manage various aspects of their card accounts and programs from their computer workstations or laptops with a user ID and password provided by Bank of America. All DOI cardholders have access to EAGLS. EAGLS features a desktop organizer, program administration, on-line reconciliation and dispute capability, and other reporting functions. Access EAGLS at the following URL: [www.gov-eagls.bankofamerica.com/](http://www.gov-eagls.bankofamerica.com/).

**O. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR):** The primary document in the Federal Acquisition Regulation System, containing policies and procedures that govern the acquisition activity of all federal agencies.

**P. GCSU:** Bank of America’s Government Card Services Unit. This customer service group assists both A/OPCs and cardholders on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week. The GCSU telephone number is 800-472-1424 (domestic call - toll free), 1-757-441-4124 (international call - call collect), or, via relay center services for individuals with hearing or speech disabilities (TTY/TDD) 1-800-672-0779.

**Q. GCSUTHD:** Bank of America’s Government Card Services Unit Technical Help Desk. This group assists EAGLS users. Access the GCSU’s Technical Help Desk at the following URL: [www.gcsuthd.bankofamerica.com/](http://www.gcsuthd.bankofamerica.com/); or call the GCSU Help Desk at 800-472-1424, or, via relay center services for individuals with hearing or speech disabilities (TTY/TDD) 1-800-672-0779.

**R. Hierarchy:** An eight level organizational structure of the integrated charge card program within DOI, e.g., DOI, bureau/office, Assistant Director/Office, Division, Branch, Office, Field Office. Each cardholder is assigned to a hierarchy based on where they work.

**S. Individually Billed Transactions:** Transactions related to official travel charged to an employee’s integrated card for which he/she must pay, e.g., lodging, meals, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) advances. [Under the terms of a pilot program, the Bureau of Reclamation is authorized to centrally bill lodging transactions. Therefore, this definition does not apply entirely

to the Bureau of Reclamation.] Employees are personally responsible for paying postage when making payment on any individually billed transaction.

**T. Integrated Solution:** Two or more business lines whose processes are integrated on the front-end (i.e., at a minimum, account set-up, account maintenance, customer service) or back-end (i.e., at a minimum, reconciliation, reporting and invoicing), or both. May be a single card or a single platform, or business line, e.g., fleet.

**U. Limited Line Card:** A charge card with a credit limit set at the level needed to cover a specific requirement in one of the integrated charge card's business lines, e.g., a specific work-related trip.

**V. Limited Use Card:** A charge card activated only for periods of an individual's official travel. Limited use cards may also be authorized for use for a period of time pending charge card privilege reinstatement for cardholders whose charge card privileges have been canceled for misuse or account delinquency. Limited use cards may have restricted credit limits or other restrictions, such as no cash access, as appropriate for the individual circumstances.

**W. Master Accounting Code (MAC):** The default account code that is initially applied to all transactions for a cardholder's account for budget tracking purposes.

**X. Merchant Category Code (MCC):** A code used to classify business types. This code is selected by the vendor and its financial institution, and the MasterCard and VISA International associations. The code controls where purchases are permitted and, based on bureau decisions, determines whether a transaction is centrally or individually billed.

**Y. Micropurchase (applicable only to the purchase business line):** An acquisition of supplies or services that does not exceed the micropurchase threshold in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 2.101, and Part 13. The thresholds are \$2,500 for supplies and services *excluding* construction and \$2,000 for construction services.

**Z. Mission Critical:** A designation for certain employees, *the nature of whose work*, e.g., extended travel requirements, overseas travel assignments, may prevent them from being able to make payments for individually-billed travel-related transactions by the specified Payment Due Date on the Bank of America Statement of Account in which the charge first appeared. As a general rule, only *accounts in good standing* are eligible for mission critical designation. A/OPCs may designate cardholders whose accounts are in good standing as being in the "mission critical" category based on a written justification by the employee's supervisor and approval by the bureau Assistant Director for Administration, or equivalent. "Mission critical" designations must be based on actual mission need (*not personal convenience*), limited to a minimum number within a bureau/office, and be limited in duration, e.g., three months. The designation of mission criticality for *delinquent* accounts that are 90 days or more past due can only be made by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget, as processed through the Office of Acquisition and

Property Management. Designation of mission criticality for delinquent accounts may only be made in extremely rare circumstances. Approval of such requests by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget may not be presumed.

**AA. Non-expendable Property:** Property which has a continuing use; is not consumed in use; is of a durable nature with an expected service life of one or more years; and has an acquisition cost of \$300 or more. (See Interior Property Management Directives, 410 DM 114-60.2, Accountability.)

**BB. Payment Due Date or Due Date:** On a Statement of Account, the Payment Due Date or Due Date is the date payment is due for the individually billed payment amount (the balance).

**CC. Reviewing Official** (Can be used interchangeably with “Approving Official” unless used in conjunction with employee travel. See definition in section 1.3.C., above.)

**DD. Simplified Acquisition:** An acquisition of supplies or services conducted according to the procedures prescribed in FAR Part 13. Depending on the type of acquisition being made, other FAR Parts may also be applicable to simplified acquisitions, e.g., FAR Parts 8, “Required Sources of Supplies and Services,” 23, “Environment, Conservation, Occupational Safety, and Drug-Free Workplace,” and 32, “Contract Financing.”

**EE. SmartPay Program:** A GSA program consisting of contracts for charge card services from which Federal agencies select charge card contractors for their purchase, travel, and fleet business lines. The SmartPay contractor referred to in these guidelines is Bank of America.

## **1.4 Roles and Responsibilities**

**A. Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB).** The AS-PMB has overall responsibility for establishing DOI accounts under the SmartPay Program, ensuring that the Department’s charge card programs comply with Federal and Departmental laws and regulations, and monitoring program effectiveness.

**B. Director, Office of Acquisition and Property Management (PAM).** PAM has oversight responsibility for the Department’s integrated charge card program, with policy responsibility for purchase and fleet charge card programs. PAM shall develop Departmental policy regarding charge card use for these business lines. PAM will also receive and review management reports, confer with A/OPCs and other administrative officers regarding integrated program, purchase and fleet card issues, and serve as the Departmentwide point of contact for GSA regarding DOI’s use of the charge card program.

**C. Director, Office of Financial Management (PFM).** PFM has policy responsibility for the travel program. PFM shall develop Departmental policy regarding delinquency management for official travel charge card use, establish management reports for the travel program, confer with A/OPCs and finance offices regarding travel charge card issues, and support PAM in the oversight responsibilities of the charge card program through the development and issuance of guidance regarding the management control and financial aspects of the charge card program.

**D. Assistant Directors for Administration (ADA).** Overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of the charge card program in each bureau/office will normally be assigned to the ADA or equivalent. This includes designating an A/OPC and other appropriate officials to oversee the charge card program, developing bureau-specific procedures for card use, ensuring fully compliant program management, security and cardholder accountability, account reconciliation and payment, scheduled documentation and transaction reviews, and initiating bureau accounts with the charge card contractor. NOTE: Some bureaus/offices may not use the ADA title; therefore, the position equivalent to ADA has these responsibilities.

**E. National Business Center (NBC).** The NBC has the operational responsibility to carry out the policies of PAM and PFM in relation to the charge card program and to function as a central Agency/Organization Program Coordinator for DOI. As such, NBC activities may include contract administration activity, bureau implementation support, system interfaces to finance and property systems, departmental reporting and data administration, development and delivery of training classes, management control reviews and screens, program development and operations refinement, security administration, payroll offset administration, and help desk support. NBC is the primary point of contact for providing charge card support services under DOI's SmartPay program task order to other Federal agencies on a cross-servicing or tag-along basis.

**F. Office of Inspector General (OIG).** The Office of Inspector General is responsible for conducting or arranging for the conduct of investigations when violations of Federal fraud statutes are suspected or alleged. Any allegation or complaint concerning potentially fraudulent misuse of a DOI-BOA-issued charge card (i.e., intentional misuse resulting in loss to the Government) must be reported to the Office of Inspector General for review and appropriate action. Following initial review of an allegation or complaint, the OIG will either open an investigation or refer the matter back to the responsible Departmental bureau/office for administrative action. (The 24-hour toll free hotline number for the Office of Inspector General is 1-800-424-5081. Please see section 2.4.E of these guidelines for additional OIG telephone, internet, and mail references.)

**G. Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC).** The A/OPC is a bureau's/office's primary liaison with the charge card contractor and PAM/PFM/NBC regarding technical and policy matters relating to the contract and bureau/office charge card use. Among an A/OPC's responsibilities are oversight of the establishment and maintenance of bureau/office



master file/official cardholder listings and related office credit limitations in the Bank of America's EAGLS system. Depending on the bureau/office, A/OPCs may work singly or be supported by regional or field A/OPCs with distinct responsibilities. A/OPCs at all levels are fully authorized to report allegations of charge card fraud (i.e., intentional misuse resulting in loss to the Government) to the Office of Inspector General for further investigation, and to interact with cardholders' supervisors regarding other misuse and payment delinquency issues.

**H. Approving Official (specific to the DOI integrated charge card program, and can also be referred to as a "Reviewing Official").** An individual responsible for oversight and monitoring of designated cardholders' compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures. Given their first-line review duties and responsibilities, Approving Officials are fully authorized to report allegations of charge card fraud (i.e., intentional misuse resulting in loss to the Government) to the Office of Inspector General for further investigation, and to counsel or advise cardholders' supervisors within their purview regarding other misuse and payment delinquency issues. Each cardholder has a reviewing/approving official who is expected to periodically review cardholder transactions on-line using the EAGLS system to ensure that charge cards are being used only for their intended, official purposes. Questions Approving Officials may have regarding the propriety of certain transactions reviewed should be promptly addressed to financial and acquisition specialists. Cardholders may not be their own reviewing/approving officials. Reviewing/Approving officials must approve certain types of program requests before they are forwarded to the A/OPC for submission to the Bank of America.

**Approving Official (specific to employee travel)** With regard to employee travel, a designated approving official is the person with responsibility and authority to review, verify and sign a travel voucher (e.g., Block 14 SF 1012) for travel under his/her span of control.

**I. Cardholders.** Cardholders are responsible for the security of their charge cards and convenience checks, using their charge card only for official, authorized purposes, paying all undisputed individually billed charges timely, complying with DOI charge card guidelines and bureau supplements thereto, and the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement, and for verifying all transactions posted to their account. Errors and discrepancies must be promptly identified, and dispute procedures initiated, as necessary. Regular review of all business line accounts by cardholders is required to ensure that improper charges are not billed to individual or central accounts. Cardholders must maintain accurate and complete records supporting their charge card transactions, including receipts, clearances and justifications for making purchases (as applicable) (see section 2.8, "Receipts" for receipt retention requirements). Cardholders are required to dispute improper charges. Each employee who is issued a charge card is authorized to use the card within established limits. Cards are to be used only by the cardholder identified on the card. Use of a charge card may not be re-delegated or transferred to anyone other than the cardholder. Cardholders are personally responsible for paying postage for payment of individually billed transactions.

## 1.5 Bureau Guidance Requirements

### What must bureau-specific charge card program guidance cover?

Bureau ADAs or equivalent are responsible for developing the operational procedures necessary to implement Departmentwide integrated charge card program policies within their respective organizations. Bureau guidance may not unnecessarily repeat Departmentwide policy, or be *less restrictive*.

Bureau guidance must implement Departmental and SmartPay Program contractor policies to include, as appropriate, bureau-specific operational instructions regarding:

- A. Card and convenience check application, issuance and use processes, including limitations on goods and services acquired, single transaction, monthly transaction and total monthly office limitations, and IRS Form 1099 and Taxpayer Identification Number reporting requirements (applicable to convenience checks);
- B. Statement of account reconciliation and payment procedures;
- C. Security, including the surrender of charge cards and convenience checks and account cancellation as part of the final employee clearance process for a cardholder separating from DOI or moving from one DOI bureau to another;
- D. Procedures to implement management controls for card use, including scheduled reviews of transaction records, frequency of reviews, review methodology, e.g, transaction review by sampling, use of EAGLS reports, and/or other methods;
- E. Compliance with Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 8 and Code of Federal Regulations Title 41, section 101-26.107, Priorities for use of supply sources, regarding required sources of supplies and services and source use priorities, and, as appropriate, any Departmental or bureau/office-specific preferred or mandatory products/sources, e.g., recycled products, narrow band radio requirements. (For Governmentwide required sources, access FAR Part 8 at the following URL: <http://www.arnet.gov/far/>);
- F. Administrative controls to ensure the destruction of damaged charge cards which have been replaced, lost or stolen credit cards and convenience checks which have been recovered (if already reported and replaced), and charge cards bearing an expiration date that has passed or bearing an invalid license tag number;
- G. Interface with the bureau/office Property Management function to ensure that applicable charge card transactions are properly reported and accounted for in bureau/office property management systems; and

H. Designation of an A/OPC and identification of their respective roles and responsibilities, as well as those of regional or field A/OPCs.

Bureaus/offices are encouraged to test innovative practices to further streamline their operations through use of the charge card. Prior to doing so, they must request and receive permission to conduct prospective pilot tests of new procedures in any or all of the business lines. (See section 1.7 of these guidelines regarding Waivers/Deviations.)

## **1.6 Designation of Agency/Organization Program Coordinator**

### **Is designation of an A/OPC mandatory for all DOI bureaus?**

Yes, each bureau/office must designate an A/OPC who will be the primary liaison for the bureau/office with Bank of America and PAM/PFM/NBC regarding technical and policy matters relating to the contract and bureau/office charge card use. Depending on bureau/office organization and requirements, A/OPCs may work singly or be supported by regional or field A/OPCs with distinct responsibilities.

## **1.7 Waivers/Deviations**

### **What procedures should be followed if my bureau/office has special needs or requirements, or wants to start a pilot program related to the charge card program?**

Bureaus/offices are encouraged to test innovative practices to further streamline their operations through use of the charge card. They may request permission to conduct pilot tests of new procedures in any or all of the business lines. They may also request certain deviations/waivers from the Departmentwide charge card policy. Requests related to the purchase and fleet business lines should be submitted to the Director, PAM. Requests related to the travel business line should be submitted to the Director, PFM (see also **NOTE** below). All requests for deviations or waivers shall be submitted to PAM or PFM by the bureau/office ADA.

At a minimum, requests should address the following factors:

A. Explain specifically the additional authority requested beyond the current authority, i.e., explain exactly *what* it is that your bureau wants by way of deviation/waiver or pilot program and how it differs from current program procedures;

B. Describe the specific actions which require exercise of the increased authority, i.e., describe *what* kinds of actions or mission requirements are prompting the proposed request for deviation/waiver or pilot program;

C. Discuss the specific reasons *why* the deviation is needed and cite any historical information available to support those reasons;

D. Document the management controls that will be used to ensure that the requested authority is used as intended;

E. State the specific impact on the bureau/office if the request is approved or denied. Give examples of expected cost reductions, streamlining or time delays in processing actions and the effect on performance (time and/or dollar amount). Include any other anticipated effects; and

F. When requested on a class basis, document the total number of people and/or transactions expected to be affected.

**NOTE:** The above Waiver/Deviation process does **not** apply to requests for exemptions to the Department's mandatory use policy concerning use of the charge card for official travel. Please see sections 5.2.B and 5.2.C of these guidelines for procedures related to requests for exemption from Government- and Departmentwide mandatory use policies related to use of the charge card for travel.

**\*\*\*\*\* End Chapter 1 \*\*\*\*\***

## **Chapter 2 General Integrated Charge Card Requirements**

### **2.1 Integrated Charge Card**

Can charge accounts be established in multiple business lines?

### **2.2 Departmentwide Charge Card Limitations/Restrictions by Business Line**

Do specific limitations and restrictions apply to the various charge card business lines?

### **2.3 Training**

What general training or orientation requirements apply to cardholders?

### **2.4 Unauthorized Use/Penalties, Reporting of Fraud/Abuse, Guarding Against Fraud and Abuse**

A. What does the term “for official Government use only” mean?

B. What does “misuse” of the Government charge card mean?

C. What corrective actions apply to charge card misuse by cardholders?

D. You’ve covered charge card misuse by cardholders, but what are some indicators of charge card misuse and possible fraud on the part of vendors or other individuals about which cardholders should be aware?

E. How do I report suspected charge card fraud?

F. If the allegation of fraud involves a vendor, shouldn’t I also contact Bank of America?

G. What is the role of the A/OPC in protecting against fraud and abuse?

H. What are the roles of managers, supervisors, Approving Officials, and others in protecting against fraud and abuse?

I. How can cardholders guard against charge card fraud and abuse by vendors or others?

J. May I use my charge card to make official purchases over the Internet?

### **2.5 Card and Convenience Check Security**

Who is ultimately responsible for proper use and safeguarding of charge cards and convenience checks?

### **2.6 Lost or Stolen Cards or Convenience Checks**

What should I do if my card or convenience checks are lost or stolen?

### **2.7 Card Issuance**

How do I apply for a Bank of America MasterCard?

### **2.8 Receipts**

Do I need to retain receipts for all my charge card transactions?

### **2.9 Tax Exemption Identifier**

Are charge card transactions tax exempt?

### **2.10 Account Suspension and Cancellation Related to Late Payment of Charge Card Bills, Mission Critical Designation, Charge Card Account Reinstatement, and Disputing Charges**

A. What are the penalties associated with non-timely payment of individually billed charge card bills?

B. If I have accounts in multiple business lines, e.g., purchase and travel, and my travel account is suspended or canceled because I have not made payment on my individually

billed travel related expenses, will that affect my charge account in the other business line(s)?

C. Is there a waiver or some means to avoid having my charge card account suspended or canceled? My duties require me to travel extensively during certain periods of time, so much so, that through no fault of my own, I am unable to file vouchers and receive reimbursement in time to make payment for my individually billed transactions by the Payment Due Date.

D. If my charge card's travel business line is canceled for misuse or account delinquency, how can my privileges be reinstated?

E. What do you mean by an "undisputed" charge?

F. What should I do if a charge appears on my charge card statement that I did not make?

## **2.11 Returned Check, Late and Collection Fees**

Do any fees apply to cardholders for returned checks or for late payment?

## **2.12 Late Payment Fees to the Cardholder by DOI for Properly Filed Travel Claims**

I understand that I am responsible for paying Bank of America in a timely manner, but what if the finance office is late in reimbursing me for my individually billed travel charges?

## **2.13 Separation of a Cardholder/Exit Procedures**

What steps must bureaus/offices take when an employee leaves the Department of the Interior or moves from one DOI bureau to another?

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## **2.1 Integrated Charge Card**

### **Can charge accounts be established in multiple business lines?**

Yes, a Bank of America account may be established in just one business line or in a combination of purchase, travel, and fleet business lines. *However*, issuance of a single charge card does *not* imply automatic activation of multiple business lines, i.e., just because you have a card, it does not mean that you automatically have authority in multiple business lines. If authorized, an additional function or functions may be added to an existing Bank of America account at any time without reissuing cards.

## **2.2 Departmentwide Charge Card Limitations/Restrictions by Business Line**

### **Do specific limitations and restrictions apply to the various charge card business lines?**

Yes, in addition to the general, i.e., Departmentwide, limitations/restrictions listed below, bureaus/offices may also set further limitations on cardholder charge limits (i.e., dollar thresholds), activities or types of goods and services that may be acquired by cardholders based on special or bureau/office unique procurement or property reporting requirements and acquisition procedures, e.g., sensitive property item lists or restricted item acquisition

requirements. Requests for waivers/deviations from any bureau-specific requirements, (i.e., those not included in the list below) should be processed in accordance with bureau/office policy. Unless a specific waiver is granted by the Office of Acquisition and Property Management or the Office of Financial Management, as appropriate, in accordance with the Waiver/Deviation or Mandatory Use Exemption procedures contained in sections 1.7 and 5.2.B of these guidelines, the following Departmentwide restrictions apply to DOI charge card transactions (See Exhibit I for a general reference guide to the following list.):

**A. Transactions *limited* to the travel business line, i.e., If you have a charge card in the travel business line, you can use it only for:**

(1) Cash advances (ATM withdrawals) within 5 calendar days of the official travel beginning date and while performing official travel;

(2) Airline, bus, train, or other travel-related tickets and Travel Management Center transaction fees;

(3) Meals, beverages, lodging, or other travel or subsistence costs. (To find out the *per diem* lodging allowances for foreign and domestic locations, access the General Services Administration's "Policyworks" via the DOI Office of Financial Management's web page at <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html>.);

(4) Commercial vehicle rental for individuals in travel status;

(5) Fuel and oil for commercial rental vehicles;

(6) Taxis, shuttle buses, and other local travel;

(7) Parking and tolls;

(8) Official business phone calls (if other authorized cards or access codes are not available.) NOTE: If you are a frequent traveler, you should request and obtain a Government calling card. Use of calling cards helps save money on hotel/motel telephone surcharges and telephone rates); and

(9) One brief personal call each day that the traveler is away from home.

**B. *Prohibited* transactions for the travel business line:**

(1) An individual travel card must not be used to pay for or reserve any travel accommodations or expenses for anyone other than the individual cardholder identified on the face of the charge card.

(2) The travel card must not be used to purchase fuel for privately owned conveyances, including aircraft, automobiles, motorcycles, trucks, and vans.

**C. Transactions *limited* to the fleet business line, i.e., If you have a charge card in the fleet business line, you can only use it for:**

(1) Fuel, oil, supplies/parts, service and repair costs for vehicles, equipment, boats and small airplanes owned or leased by DOI bureaus/offices. **Exceptions:** Fuel, oil, service, parts, and repair costs for vehicles in the GSA Interagency Fleet Management System (IFMS) are *not* covered by the DOI integrated charge card contract except under a specific agreement with GSA. GSA has its own fleet charge card which should be requested and used for vehicles leased from the IFMS. Also, in some circumstances, at bureau discretion, due to quantity/volume requirements, the purchase business line may be used to acquire fuel, oil, supplies/parts for vehicles, equipment, boats, and aircraft.

(2) Parking and toll fees. **Exception:** At bureau discretion, the purchase business line may also be used to pay limited monthly parking (less than 12 consecutive months), multiple fare cards, and toll fees, e.g., purchase of a monthly “smart” toll card for an office vehicle.

**D. *Prohibited* transactions for the fleet business line, i.e., You cannot use the fleet business line to:**

(1) Purchase fuel, oil, supplies/parts, service and repair costs for any privately owned vehicles/equipment, boats and aircraft.

(2) Parking and toll fees for privately owned vehicles.

**E. Transactions *limited* to the purchase business line, i.e., If you have a charge card in the purchase business line, you can only use it for:**

(1) Purchase of supplies or services, except construction, up to \$2,500;

(2) Construction service purchases up to \$2,000;

(3) Payment (i.e., *not* procurement) for supplies or services **above** \$2,500 ( \$2,000 for construction) within a contracting officer’s warrant limitations, if payment by charge card is authorized in the terms of the basic contract, purchase order, basic ordering agreement, or blanket purchase agreement. **This option is not applicable to cardholders whose authority is limited to micropurchases**, i.e., cardholders whose authority is limited to \$2,500 (\$2,000 for construction); and

(4) Placing task or delivery orders (if authorized in the basic contract, basic ordering agreement, or blanket purchase agreement) within warrant limitations.



NOTE TO A/OPCs: In many cases within DOI, certain warranted contracting officers (i.e., those issued warrants under the DOI Contracting Officers Warrant System Manual) have a transaction limit for open market actions and a separate, higher limit for GSA Federal Supply Schedule and other established sources buys. In setting up cardholder accounts, bureaus must consider the higher of the two limits for purposes of establishing transaction limits for the account.

**F. *Prohibited* transactions for the purchase business line, i.e., If you have a charge card in the purchase business line, you cannot use it for:**

- (1) Acquisition of firearms and weapons;
- (2) Long term (cumulative total duration of 12 months or longer) rental of buildings, garages, parking spaces for official vehicles, or land;
- (3) Purchase of major telecommunications systems, e.g., PBX, voicemail, etc. (*However*, telephone equipment may be purchased unless otherwise restricted by bureau/office regulations. Pre-paid calling cards, cell phones, and calling plans may also be acquired through the purchase business line);
- (4) Printing and copying services *regardless* of dollar amount unless a waiver has been issued by the Government Printing Office (GPO) or payment is being made directly to the GPO for printing and copying services rendered;
- (5) *In the absence of waivers or other required clearances*, purchases of supplies or services from open market sources when the same products are available from the required sources identified in FAR 8.001(a)(1) and (2), e.g., UNICOR (Federal Prisons), JWOD, wholesale sources such as GSA and Defense Logistics Agency, mandatory and optional use Federal Supply Schedules. (See section 3.3 of these guidelines for further information on required sources.)
- (6) Individual employee travel expenses such as:
  - (a.) Cash Advances (This includes writing a convenience check against one's own purchase account to oneself or any other individual for cash advance or reimbursement purposes.);
  - (b.) Airline, bus, train or other travel-related tickets and Travel Management Center transaction fees;
  - (c.) Meals, beverages, lodging or other individual employee travel or subsistence related costs. (Note: Exceptions may apply for the rental of multiple lodging or purchase of meals for fire crews or other teams or crews in emergency situations.);

- (d.) Commercial vehicle rental/lease for individuals in travel status;
- (e.) Any individual travel expenses for a DOI employee;
- (f.) Commercial rental vehicle repairs/services for individuals in travel status;
- (g.) Fuel, oil, or repair costs for commercial rental vehicles for individuals in travel status, and vehicles in the IFMS;
- (h.) Parking and toll fees **Exception:** At bureau discretion, the purchase business line may be used to pay limited monthly parking (less than 12 consecutive months), multiple fare cards, and toll fees, e.g., purchase of a monthly “smart” toll card for an office vehicle; and
- (i.) Telephone calls (official, or the brief calls of a personal nature as authorized to travelers under the Federal Travel Regulation).

Use of a purchase card as a method of procurement or payment (as specified above) does **not** waive any legislative or regulatory restrictions or requirements. Where applicable, any required waiver, approval or authorization must be obtained prior to using the charge card for a purchase. The waiver must be kept with the cardholder’s record of the purchase and made available to auditors or other reviewing officials requesting such information. Cardholders must consult with a warranted contracting officer, finance or property official, as appropriate, when any question exists about a potential purchase of a restricted/limited service or supply.

## **2.3 Training**

### **What general training or orientation requirements apply to cardholders?**

Prior to using the charge card, *all* cardholders must carefully review:

- A. Departmental and applicable bureau/office charge card program guidelines;
  - B. NationsBank or Bank of America Integrated Card Program Cardholder Program Guide (the guide will reference NationsBank if it was issued prior to September 1999);
  - C. Agreement Between the Department of the Interior Employee and Bank of America (access the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement at: <http://www.doi.gov/pam/charge.html>); and
  - D. MasterCard Government Card Guide to Benefits.
- (Items A through D are, or were provided to cardholders as part of their card issuance package.)

It is essential that prospective cardholders fully understand their responsibilities pursuant to the above guidelines and agreements prior to card activation and use. For example, when a cardholder applies for, activates, signs or uses his or her Department of the Interior-sponsored

Bank of America-issued MasterCard, he/she thereby agrees to comply with the terms and conditions of the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement. This includes *but is not limited to*: (1) Federal and Departmental “official use only” policy regarding charge card use; (2) the requirement to pay all undisputed individually billed transactions by the Payment Due Date specified on the cardholder’s billing Statement of Account; and (3) the agreement that *no other* person is permitted to use the charge card or account issued to the cardholder for charges or for any other reason.

In addition to the basic training/orientation requirements covered above, bureaus may require prospective cardholders to complete in-house or commercial charge card training *prior to* application or charge card issuance.

Although the Office of Acquisition and Property Management reserves the right to require bureaus/offices to develop and implement periodic charge card refresher training for all cardholders, *if a cardholder’s bureau does not currently require or offer supplementary training for general charge card use*, prospective cardholders or those requiring refresher charge card training are encouraged to access the web-based self-study course developed by the Bureau of Land Management. Developed to provide cardholders, Approving Officials, and managers with a basic knowledge of the Federal regulations, policies, and procedures needed to make informed decisions for charge card use, the course can be accessed at: [www.ntc.blm.gov/chargecard](http://www.ntc.blm.gov/chargecard).

**PURCHASE BUSINESS LINE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:** In addition to the above, *further* training is required for prospective cardholders in the purchase business line. Please see section 3.1. of these guidelines for information regarding training specific to the purchase business line.

## **2.4 Unauthorized Use/Penalties, Reporting of Fraud/Abuse, Guarding Against Fraud/Abuse**

NOTE: In the following section, use of the word “charge card” includes convenience check use, as applicable.

### **A. What does the term “for official Government use only” mean?**

The word “official” in the context of “official Government use” means authorized and pertaining *directly* to one’s office or duty. The DOI integrated charge card is to be used only for official, authorized requirements and expenditures in the areas of travel, purchase, and fleet.

*Intentional* use of the charge card by a cardholder for transactions other than those authorized and related to official Government business may be considered an attempt to commit fraud against the U.S. Government and result in cancellation of the employee's charge card privileges and disciplinary action against the employee under Departmental and Governmentwide administrative procedures. In certain cases, criminal penalties may also be pursued.

**B. What does “misuse” of the Government charge card mean?**

“Misuse” of the Government charge card is *any* improper or unauthorized use of the card, whether intentional or unintentional. While intentional misuse of the charge card is more serious, any misuse of the card must be addressed immediately by corrective action.

**C. What corrective actions apply to charge card misuse by cardholders?**

If a charge cardholder, A/OPC, Approving Official, or other interested party is, or becomes aware that a charge card has been or is being misused, they should immediately report the action to the cardholder’s supervisor. The supervisor is required to take immediate action to gather facts and discuss the incident with the employee. If the supervisor is satisfied that the charge card misuse was not intentional on the part of the employee and/or did not result in loss to the Government, he/she must counsel the employee and take appropriate action based on guidance contained the Department of the Interior’s Personnel Handbook on “Charges and Penalty Selection for Disciplinary and Adverse Actions” (see Part 2.a., “Selecting the Penalty”).

Misuse of a charge card may result in, but, at the supervisor’s discretion, is not limited to repayment of unauthorized charges, suspension or cancellation of charge card privileges, written or oral reprimands, warnings, or admonishment, requirements to complete remedial training, and/or revocation of contracting officer’s warrant authority pursuant to the DOI Contracting Officers Warrant Manual, as appropriate. Deciding officials should ensure, to the extent possible, that employees who commit similar offenses are treated consistently.

If, following discussions with the employee and the review of factual information regarding the incident, the supervisor has reason to believe that the misuse was fraudulent in nature (i.e., intentional misuse resulting in loss to the Government), he or she must contact the Office of Inspector General for guidance or referral.

**NOTE:** Employees who lose their charge card privileges through cancellation or suspension due to misuse or account delinquency, are expected to use personal funds to finance all travel expenses (except for transportation tickets) on official travel *until charge card privileges are reinstated*. When personal funds are thus used, employees will be reimbursed for qualifying travel expenses by submitting a proper travel voucher. (See section 2.10.D for further information including application for travel advances in cases of extreme hardship for employees who have lost privileges in the travel business line.)

**D. You’ve covered charge card misuse by cardholders, but what are some indicators of charge card misuse and possible fraud on the part of vendors or other individuals about which cardholders should be aware?**

Cardholders must be aware of possible charge card misuse by vendors or other parties and immediately report it as indicated in sections E and F below. Some indicators of possible charge

card misuse or fraud by vendors or other parties include:

1. Unsolicited telephone calls or offers by individuals who request your charge card account number or social security number. (Do not provide this information unless you initiated the call or request.);
2. Unsolicited or unannounced calls from individuals claiming to represent Bank of America who request card account, social security, or other information. (Bank of America will always announce any such requests for information formally and in advance or coordinate requests for such information through your respective A/OPCs); and
3. Unexplained and/or improper charges made to your charge account.

**E. How do I report suspected charge card fraud?**

Within DOI (see 355 DM (Departmental Manual)1.3.E), the Office of Inspector General is the designated authority for receipt of any information, allegation or complaint regarding potential fraud (i.e., intentional misuse resulting in loss to the Government) within the Department or Departmental programs.

Suspected fraud related to the charge card by a cardholder, vendor or others should be reported immediately to the Office of Inspector General, together with any information supporting the suspected fraud, e.g., billing statements, transaction records and/or EAGLS reporting data.

To report suspected fraud, contact the Office of Inspector General **Hotline** by:

(1) **Telephone:** Within the Continental United States:  
24-Hour Toll Free Hotline Number  
1-800-424-5081

Eastern Region - Arlington, Virginia  
703-235-9221

Central Region - Lakewood, Colorado  
303-236-8296

Western Region - Sacramento, California  
916-978-5630

(2) **Internet:** Access: <http://www.oig.doi.gov> (Click on “Hotline”)

## **Reporting Suspected Charge Card Fraud to OIG (Continued)**

**(3) Mail:** U.S. Department of the Interior  
Office of the Inspector General  
1849 C Street, NW (Mail Stop 5539-MIB)  
Washington, DC 20240

### **F. If the allegation of fraud involves a vendor, shouldn't I also contact Bank of America?**

Yes. If you suspect fraud involving a vendor, dispute the improper charge (as applicable) and immediately notify Bank of America at: 1-800-472-1424 (domestic toll-free call), 1-757-441-4124 (international-collect call), or for relay center services for individuals with a hearing or speech disability, TTY/TDD access: 1-800-672-0779.

### **G. What is the role of the A/OPC in protecting against fraud and abuse?**

The role of A/OPCs at all levels in protecting against charge card program fraud and abuse includes:

1. Providing advice and assistance to managers, supervisors, Approving Officials, cardholders and others, as requested;
2. Conducting or participating in charge card reviews in accordance with Departmental and bureau charge card policy;
3. Carefully reviewing all cardholder applications and requests;
4. Getting the word out to employees within their bureau/office regarding charge card "scams" by vendors or other parties.

### **H. What are the roles of managers, supervisors, Approving Officials, and others interested in protecting against fraud and abuse ?**

Managers, supervisors, Approving Officials, and others can do these things to protect against charge card program fraud and abuse:

1. Review, update, and follow management control procedures;
2. Make sure employees are correctly trained in the proper use of the charge card;
3. Don't accept "I don't know" as an answer from a cardholder or vendor to a question about account transactions;
4. Watch spending patterns and vendor sources (a sudden unexplained increase in purchases or charges from questionable vendor sources may indicate a problem);
5. Periodically review cardholders' transaction statements, either their monthly paper statements or on-line in EAGLS at any time; and
6. Take immediate action when charge card misuse is discovered.

## I. How can cardholders guard against charge card fraud and abuse by vendors or others?

Based on general guidance from the Federal Trade Commission applicable to everyone with a charge card:

### DO:

- Sign and activate your charge cards as soon as they arrive;
- For over-the-counter purchases, keep an eye on your card during the card swiping transaction, and get it back as quickly as possible;
- Void incorrect receipts;
- Destroy carbons;
- Save receipts to compare with billing statements;
- Open or access billing statements promptly and reconcile accounts at least monthly; and
- Dispute any questionable charges promptly with the vendor (see sections 2.10.E and F of this guideline for specifics regarding disputed billings).

### DO NOT:

- Sign a blank receipt. When you sign a receipt, draw a line through any blank spaces above the total;
- Write your account number on a postcard or the outside of an envelope;
- Give out your account number over the phone unless you are making the call to a company you know is reputable.
- Leave your card, convenience checks, Personal Identification Number (PIN), passwords, or charge card billing statement information (on paper or electronic) unattended. If you are not using your card or convenience checks, keep them in a secure place.
- Your card is **not** transferrable - **never** let **anyone** else use your charge card, convenience checks, account number, PIN, or other sensitive information related to your charge card.

## J. May I use my charge card to make official purchases over the Internet?

Internet shopping on required and commercial, open market source web sites is rapidly expanding. Cardholders may use their charge card to transact official business over the Internet. However, in doing so, they must keep the following guidance in mind:

- **Know who you are dealing with.** If you have never heard of the seller, check on its location and reputation with the Better Business Bureau or the state attorney general's office;
- **Protect your privacy.** Provide personal information only if you know who's collecting it, why, and how it's going to be used;
- **Guard your passwords.** Use different passwords when you are making a purchase than you use to log on to your computer or network;
- **Order only on a secure server.** Look for an unbroken key or padlock picture at the bottom of the browser window, or the letters **https** in the web site's URL to ensure your

transmission is protected. Buy only from web vendors that protect your charge card information when you order on-line;

- **Check shipping and handling fees.** Do not forget to factor these into the cost of the order, and to choose the delivery option that best meets your office's needs; and
- **Track your purchases.** Keep printouts of the web pages with details about the transaction, including return policies if you are not satisfied . (Buyer Beware: Some vendors have different return policies for items purchased over the Internet versus items purchased on-site at store locations. Make sure that the vendor's return policy is favorable to your requirements.)

## **2.5 Card and Convenience Check Security**

### **Who is ultimately responsible for proper use and safeguarding of charge cards and convenience checks?**

Proper use and safeguarding of charge cards and convenience checks is the responsibility of *each* cardholder. Accordingly, cardholders should take appropriate precautions comparable to those which they would take to secure their personal checks, credit cards or cash. Improper and unauthorized use of the charge card or convenience checks may render the user personally liable for payment, charge card withdrawal and/or disciplinary action pursuant to Federal, Department, and bureau standards. (See 370 DM 752, Appendix A, as revised.)

## **2.6 Lost or Stolen Cards or Convenience Checks**

### **What should I do if my card or convenience checks are lost or stolen?**

If charge cards or convenience checks are lost or stolen, a cardholder must:

A. Notify Bank of America at (1-800-472-1424 (domestic-toll free call), 1-757-441-4124 (international-call collect), or for relay center services for individuals with a hearing or speech disability, TTY/TDD access 1-800-672-0779, *as soon as* he or she is aware of the loss or theft, (easier to remember is the telephone number 1-800-MC-ASSIST. Once connected to 1-800- MC-ASSIST, ask the MasterCard agent to route your call to Bank of America) and

B. Notify his or her supervisor *as soon as* they are aware of the theft, and

C. Notify his or her respective A/OPC within *one* working day of the discovery.

The same federal law that protects private sector credit cardholders regarding unauthorized use of charge cards applies to charge cards under the SmartPay program. That is, under federal law if unauthorized use of a lost or stolen card has occurred, the liability of the Government will not exceed the lesser of \$50 or the amount of money, property, labor, or services obtained before notification to Bank of America. (The cardholder himself/herself will not be liable for



unauthorized charges resulting from lost or stolen cards/checks.) It is extremely important, therefore, that notification (at the telephone numbers indicated above) be given to Bank of America with pertinent information regarding charge card loss or theft and/or unauthorized account usage as soon as an individual becomes aware of it. The cardholder will be required to complete a Cardholder Statement of Disputed Items in the course of Bank of America's investigation of unauthorized charge card use.

When a charge card is reported as lost or stolen, Bank of America will immediately close the account. A new account will be set up for that employee and a new plastic will be issued.

## **2.7 Card Issuance**

### **How do I apply for a Bank of America MasterCard?**

New DOI or bureau employees who are expected to travel on official business are **required** to apply for a charge card in the travel business line within 30 calendar days of their appointment. Prospective travel cardholders must acknowledge their understanding of the Department's mandatory use policy in writing, and obtain their supervisor's approval when applying for a charge card in the travel business line. Employees who carry delinquent account balances from a previous travel charge card will be required to satisfy their existing obligation before a new card will be issued.

Individuals interested in obtaining a Bank of America MasterCard for official purchase requirements must first consult with their supervisor to ensure that a valid need exists for them to have charge account privileges in the purchase business line, and that they are eligible to receive a charge card, e.g., no delinquent accounts or history of charge card misuse.

Individuals working for the Department of the Interior and its bureaus/offices under Interagency Personnel Actions and employees on detail from other Federal Government agencies may be issued Bank of America - DOI charge cards in the *travel* business line subject to any limitations deemed appropriate by the DOI bureau/office. In doing so, DOI bureaus and offices must ensure that the cards are canceled upon expiration of the detail period.

To apply for a charge card, prospective cardholders should refer to their respective bureau/office charge card program guidance for specific charge card application procedures. The same application form is used for all Department of the Interior employees and eligible detailees (as described above).

## **2.8 Receipts**

### **Do I need to retain receipts for all my charge card transactions?**

Yes, you are required to retain charge card transaction receipts as follows:

**A. Purchase Business Line Receipts:** Cardholders must retain all original receipts and documentation *directly supporting* their charge card transactions made through the purchase business line for a period of three years after final payment (see FAR 4.805(b)(4)).

See FAR 4.805(b)(1) through (13) for procurement record retention requirements for specific actions not covered in 2.8.A., above.

All receipts must be made available for audit or review within 48 hours after a request has been received.

**NOTE: The three-year retention period applies only to receipts and other documentation that *directly support* charge card transactions in the purchase business line. It does not apply to general administrative or financial files which may have separate record retention schedules. Consult bureau guidance regarding general administrative and financial file retention requirements.**

**B. Fleet Receipts:** All fleet receipts shall be maintained in accordance with bureau/GSA instructions.

**C. Travel Receipts:** Any required travel-related receipts that must be submitted with a travel voucher in accordance with Federal Travel, Departmental, and bureau regulations must remain with the travel voucher. Receipts are *not* required for meals or incidental travel transactions under \$75.

## **2.9 Tax Exemption Identifier**

### **Are charge card transactions tax exempt?**

A Departmentwide tax exempt identification number, i.e., **140001849**, has been established and is printed on each charge card. The DOI tax exemption number has been registered with state taxation authorities nationwide and in the U.S. Territories. General Governmentwide tax exemption status is also coded in the prefix of the 16-digit charge card account number on the face of the charge card, i.e., the prefix numbers 5568 16 (individual cards) or 5568 86 (for cards issued to vehicles or motorized equipment) on the face of the charge card are Government tax exempt account identifiers for MasterCard.

*However*, most state laws and regulations limit tax exemption status to **direct payment by the Government**, e.g., centrally billed transactions, as opposed to reimbursement by individuals, e.g., individually billed transactions. Cardholders are urged to bring the DOI and MasterCard tax exempt number/identifier to the attention of merchants whenever there are questions regarding tax exempt status. Further state specific tax information, including points of contact, may be found at the following Internet site: <http://www.taxweb.com/state/index.html>.

## **2.10 Account Suspension and Cancellation Related to Late Payment of Charge Card Bills, Mission Critical Designation, Charge Card Account Reinstatement, and Disputing Charges**

### **A. What are the penalties associated with non-timely payment of individually billed charge card bills?**

Cardholders must comply with the terms and conditions of the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement, including the timely payment of account balances. When they sign, activate, or use their charge cards, cardholders agree to comply with the agreement. Under the terms of the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement, cardholders are obligated to pay the undisputed individually billed balance due on their account by the Payment Due Date specified on their Statement of Account.

Bank of America may request collection assistance on accounts 61 or more days past due from the **Date of the Statement of Account** on which the charges first appeared. Upon the written request for collections assistance by Bank of America for an account that is unpaid 61 days or more from the **Date of the Statement of Account** on which the charges first appeared, the Department will initiate a process to collect delinquent amounts owed on *individually billed* charge card accounts from future salaries paid to employees (salary offset). The Department's National Business Center Payroll Operations Division will notify the employee in writing of the contractor's request for collection assistance, inform the employee of his or her "due process" rights relating to the contractor's claim, and indicate that if the account is not satisfactorily resolved within the next sixty days (i.e., by the 120<sup>th</sup> calendar day following the **Date of the Statement of Account** on which the charges first appeared), salary offset will automatically begin. **NOTE:** With regard to travel: Salary offset actions will not be initiated when an employee has notified the Payroll Operations Division in writing that he or she has not been reimbursed for the properly filed travel voucher causing the offset action request. The Payroll Operations Division will confirm this with the employee's immediate supervisor or travel approving official.

The following describes the account suspension/cancellation, delinquency notification and salary offset processes in further detail:

- 1. Suspension and Salary Offset Warning.** Bank of America MasterCard charge accounts will be suspended and further charges prohibited if any undisputed individually billed transactions remain unpaid 61 calendar days after the **Date of the Statement of Account** on which the charges first appeared. Upon notification from Bank of America of account suspension at 61 calendar days, the National Business Center Payroll Operations Division will send a letter to the employee and inform him/her of the contractor's request for collection assistance, the employee's due process rights, and indicate that if the account is not satisfactorily resolved within the next sixty days (i.e., by the 120<sup>th</sup> calendar day following the **Date of the Statement of Account**), payroll offset will begin.

**2. Cancellation and Payroll Offset.** If any undisputed individually billed transaction remains unpaid 96 calendar days after the **Date of the Statement of Account** on which the charge first appeared, the respective Bank of America charge account will be canceled. If an account balance is not satisfactorily resolved, the National Business Center Payroll Operations Division may begin payroll offset after 120 calendar days.

Remember, as stated above with regard to individually billed travel expenses, the Department will **not** initiate a salary offset request by Bank of America if an employee has filed a timely and otherwise proper voucher and it has not been paid. If notification of salary offset is received by an employee who has not been paid for a proper and timely filed travel voucher, the employee must notify the NBC Payroll Operations Division in writing (using the return mail information provided in the notice) that he or she has not been reimbursed and provide the name and telephone number of his or her travel voucher approving official for confirmation.

Employees with delinquent accounts for which travel vouchers have not been filed will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Department of the Interior's Personnel Handbook on Charges and Penalty Selection for Disciplinary and Adverse Actions for disregard of directives or regulations.

In addition to the above, in accordance with the terms of the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement, an account may be canceled if the account has been suspended twice during a 12-month period for non-payment of undisputed principal amounts and becomes past due again.

**B. If I have accounts in multiple business lines, e.g., purchase and travel, and my travel account is suspended or canceled because I have not made payment on my individually-billed travel related expenses, will that affect my charge account in the other business line(s)?**

Yes. In both cases, i.e., account suspension and/or cancellation, *all* privileges associated with a cardholder's account will be de-activated upon suspension or cancellation of a charge account in one business line, e.g., suspension or cancellation of the travel business line in an integrated account will result in suspension or cancellation of any other business line(s) (e.g., fleet and/or purchase), in a cardholder's account.

**C. Is there a waiver or some means to avoid having my charge card account suspended or canceled? My duties require me to travel extensively during certain periods of time, so much so, that through no fault of my own, I am unable to file vouchers and receive reimbursement in time to make payment for my individually billed transactions by the Payment Due Date.**

Yes, in some cases. Certain employees whose charge card accounts are in good standing (i.e., no delinquencies) and the nature of whose work, e.g., extended travel requirements, overseas travel assignments, may prevent them from being able to make payments for individually-billed transactions by the specified Payment Due Date, may be designated by their respective A/OPC,

upon the written approval of the cardholder's supervisor and concurrence by the bureau ADA or equivalent, as a "mission critical" employee. **NOTE: Employees who are on long-term travel are expected to file vouchers at least every 30 days.**

If a charge cardholder's account is delinquent, i.e., over 90 calendar days past due, and mission critical designation is being requested, the request for mission critical designation must be: (1) Made in writing to include a justification for the need for mission critical designation, an explanation of why the account is delinquent, and the steps the individual is taking to pay his or her outstanding balance; (2) signed by the employee's supervisor; and (3) transmitted through the bureau ADA to the Director, Office of Acquisition and Property Management for processing and decision by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget. Designation of mission criticality for delinquent accounts may only be made in extremely rare circumstances. Approval of such requests by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget may not be presumed.

The core requirements for mission critical designations (even for accounts in good standing) must be: (1) based on actual mission need (*not the personal convenience of the cardholder*); (2) limited to a minimum number of employees within a bureau/office; and (3) of limited duration based on actual program requirements, e.g., three months.

**D. If my charge card's travel business line is canceled for misuse or account delinquency, how can my privileges be reinstated?**

Employees who lose their charge card privileges due to misuse or account delinquency are expected to use personal funds to finance all travel expenses (except for transportation tickets) on official travel *until charge card privileges are reinstated*. When personal funds are thus used, employees will be reimbursed for qualifying travel expenses by submitting a proper travel voucher.

In cases of extreme hardship, employees who have lost travel business line privileges may request written approval for a travel advance on a trip-by-trip basis from their Program Assistant Secretary or equivalent, who may redelegate this authority not lower than the bureau Assistant Director for Administration (or equivalent) level. Consideration of such requests will be made on a case-by-case basis, and approval should not be assumed. A written record of all such approvals, as well as the basis for each approval, will be maintained by the approving office with a copy forwarded to the Office of Financial Management. This record shall be regularly reviewed by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget.

The following steps must be followed in order to reinstate charge card privileges:

1. The individual account balance must be paid in full;
2. The cardholder must reapply for the charge card, i.e., complete a new application for a **limited use** card;

3. The cardholder's supervisor must approve the new application;
4. The A/OPC must indicate on the application that the account will be only for limited use, and indicate when the first use will occur (if known);
5. If the cardholder's account was canceled, the cardholder's existing account will be re-opened and a new card will be sent to the cardholder;
6. If the cardholder's account was charged off, the cardholder will receive a new account and a new card will be sent to the cardholder;
7. The account will be maintained by Bank of America to only allow the travel/fleet option. A/OPCs are encouraged to manage the account with an option set that does not allow cash in the event the cardholder's history indicates cash abuse;
8. The A/OPC must specify a date for the card to allow new transaction activity and specify a date to deactivate the account on a trip-by-trip basis. **NOTE:** It is the employee's immediate supervisor's responsibility to notify the A/OPC prior to each trip and provide a copy of the travel authorization in order to activate the limited card use option;
9. The A/OPC may also lower the credit limit on the account to place a lower spending cap on the cardholder;
10. The cardholder's reinstated account must be in good standing for one full year, *with no late payments*, before purchase authority may be reinstated (if authorized) and before activation/deactivation management may stop.

**E. What do you mean by an "undisputed" charge?**

An undisputed charge is a charge assessed to your charge card that you do not question or debate from a standpoint of charged amount or whether you actually made the charge.

**F. What should I do if a charge appears on my charge card statement that I did not make?**

1. If a cardholder has made a purchase from a vendor but the price, quantity, or charge is not accurate, or if a return and adjustment must be made, as a first step, he or she should try to resolve the disputed charge with the vendor. If a resolution is reached between the vendor and cardholder, an exchange or credit can be made to the cardholder's account by the vendor.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved with the vendor or the problem is an unresolved transaction or billing error, the cardholder should contact the Bank of America's Government Card Services Unit at 1-800-472-1424 (domestic call - toll free) or 1-757-441-4124 (international call - call collect), or, for relay center services for individuals with a hearing or speech disability, TTY/TDD access: 1-800-672-0779. Cardholders may also contact Bank of America regarding disputes through EAGLS. (To do so, access EAGLS at <http://www.gov-eagls.bankofamerica.com>. At the

“Transaction Information Menu,” click on the “Dispute Transaction” option. Cardholders must have their assigned EAGLS System User ID and Password to access EAGLS.)

After contacting Bank of America, the cardholder will receive a provisional credit and a dispute form will be sent to him/her to document the dispute. The dispute form must include the account number, the merchant’s name, the transaction amount, the transaction date, the cardholder’s signature, and a detailed explanation of the dispute. (Bank of America will notify the cardholder if any additional documentation is required to resolve the particular case. The information may be FAXed to the Bank of America at 1-757-624-6323.)

Cardholders must assert a dispute or billing error in writing to Bank of America within 60 days of the date of the statement reflecting the error. Bank of America will acknowledge the billing error assertion in writing within 30 days of receipt. Additionally, Bank of America will resolve the billing error within two full billing cycles after the assertion, not to exceed 90 days.

If Bank of America determines that a billing error did **not** occur, the transaction amount will be billed on the next statement after the dispute investigation is complete and a letter will be mailed with an explanation. If a cardholder does not agree with the Bank of America’s finding that a billing error did **not** occur, and continues to have concerns regarding the disputed transaction, he/she should consult their respective A/OPC or sub-coordinator who will work with them and Bank of America representatives to resolve the issue. If Bank of America determines that a billing error **did** occur, the cardholder will receive a letter advising that the error has been corrected and the credit will remain on the cardholder’s account.

(See also sections 2.4 E and F if fraudulent charge card use is suspected.)

## **2.11 Returned Check, Late Fees, and Collection Fees**

### **Do any fees apply to cardholders for returned checks or for late payment?**

Yes, the following fees apply under the SmartPay contract and Bank of America Cardholder Agreement:

**A. Returned Check Fee.** A \$20 fee charged a cardholder by Bank of America for any payment which is returned for any reason.

**B. Late Fee.** In accordance with the GSA SmartPay contract and the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement, a \$20 fee for any payment of individually billed charges not received within 120 calendar days after the **Date of the Statement of Account** on which the charges first appeared. The cardholder is responsible for paying the late payment fee. However, if a cardholder can show that his or her travel voucher was properly prepared and submitted within five working days after the conclusion of travel and payment was not made by his or her respective Finance Office in time to avoid the late payment fee, then the employee’s bureau/office will reimburse the employee for any late payment fees.

**C. Collection Fees.** If Bank of America refers a cardholder's account to any attorney for collection, the cardholder will be responsible for attorney's fees, if any, not to exceed 25% of the account balance plus all other costs of collection and court costs except where prohibited by law.

**AVOID LATE FEES AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS: (1) Pay all undisputed individually billed charges timely; and (2) to ensure that your account will be promptly and properly credited, ALWAYS remember to put your charge card account number on the face of any check that you send to Bank of America.**

## **2.12 Late Payment Fees to the Cardholder by DOI for Properly Filed Travel Claims**

**I understand that I am responsible for paying Bank of America in a timely manner, but what if the finance office is late in reimbursing me for my individually billed travel charges?**

In accordance with the Bank of America Cardholder Agreement, a cardholder must pay the charge card contractor by the specified Payment Due Date on the Statement of Account on which the charge first appeared. However, for its part, the Department must pay travel claims within 30 calendar days after receipt of a proper voucher by the designated travel voucher approving official. Any travel voucher submitted to a designated approving official that cannot be approved must be returned to the employee within seven calendar days after receipt with an explanation as to why the travel voucher could not be approved as submitted.

Travelers reimbursed after the 30 calendar day period from the date of submission of a proper travel voucher or claim will automatically be paid a late payment penalty. (See section 5.7 of these guidelines for further information regarding the preparation, submission, and processing of travel vouchers.)

Employees are reminded that Departmental policy requires travel vouchers to be submitted within five work days after completion of travel, or every 30 days in cases of extended travel.

## **2.13 Separation of a Cardholder/Exit Procedures**

**What steps must bureaus/offices take when an employee leaves the Department of the Interior or moves from one DOI bureau to another?**

Bureaus must develop specific employee clearance procedures implementing the following requirements to ensure that the Bank of America MasterCard and convenience checks destroyed, and that outstanding balances are paid in full when an employee is separated from the Department or moves from one DOI bureau to another.

A. Bureaus/offices must immediately cancel all contractor-issued charge card accounts when an employee cardholder leaves the DOI. or moves from one bureau to another.



B. Charge card plastic(s) and convenience checks must be destroyed.

C. In addition, bureau/office employees with exit clearance oversight responsibilities must: (1) Verify the account status in EAGLS and determine whether any amounts are due; (2) attempt to obtain a check from the employee payable to Bank of America, for the full amount of undisputed individually billed charges that are outstanding; (3) inform the exiting employee that if he/she has an outstanding balance, the charge card contractor will be notified of their departure and provided with the employee's forwarding address. In addition, the exiting employee must be informed that if he/she has been appropriately reimbursed for individually billed travel related expenses but is separating from the Department of the Interior with a delinquent balance, his/her account information will be referred to the Office of Inspector General (OIG); and (4) *either* immediately notify the Bank of America of the change in status (including forwarding address) if they have authority in EAGLS to do so, *or* provide the information to the cardholder's respective A/OPC for prompt coordination with the Bank of America. In cases where an employee is separating from DOI with a delinquent balance (as covered above), the bureau exit clearance official will refer cardholder information by telephone or in writing to the OIG.

**\*\*\*\*\* End Chapter 2 \*\*\*\*\***

## **Chapter 3 Charge Card Guidance and Procedures Specific to the Purchase Business Line**

### **3.1 Training**

A. In Chapter 2, you covered general charge card training requirements. Are there additional training requirements for cardholders who use the charge card's purchase business line?

B. I received purchase card training under the previous Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card Program. Do I have to take it again in order to receive purchase business line privileges under the current program?

### **3.2 Purchasing Authorities**

To what levels is purchasing authority delegated under the purchase business line?

### **3.3 Requirements When Making Purchases**

A. What procedural requirements apply to making purchases with the charge card?

B. In response to Question 3.3.A, you mention "required sources" in item 3. Please provide further guidance on these sources and the requirements to buy from them.

C. Are there other Government- or Department-wide buying requirements that I should keep in mind?

### **3.4 Convenience Checks**

A. What are convenience checks? Are convenience checks available only to individuals with accounts in the purchase business line?

B. When may convenience checks be used?

C. When must convenience checks not be used?

D. What other procedures or restrictions apply?

### **3.5 Property Issues**

Do special or different property requirements apply for property purchased or paid for through use of the charge card or convenience checks?

### **3.6 Review of Charge Card Purchase Transaction Records**

What are bureau/office responsibilities regarding review of purchase cardholder accounts?

\*\*\*\*\*

### **3.1 Training**

**A. In Chapter 2, you covered general charge card training requirements. Are there additional training requirements for cardholders who use the charge card's purchase business line?**

Yes, cardholders who are authorized to use the charge card purchase business line **limited to** micropurchase transactions must complete training in micropurchase and/or simplified acquisition procedures associated with the charge card as a prerequisite to receipt and use of the card's purchase business line. This basic type of training can be obtained commercially or through bureau/office training programs. [NOTE: Generally, commercial sources offer a one-day (8 credit hour) course in the Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card. In-house training may be longer or shorter and offered in a medium other than classroom training, e.g., distance learning, at

bureau discretion, provided that class coverage includes at minimum, a discussion of the SmartPay Program, DOI integrated charge card guideline requirements, buying from established and required sources including use of GSA Advantage!, jwod.com, unicor.gov and other web sites for buying from required sources, placing orders against established sources, open market purchases, and cardholder authority and responsibility.

Simplified acquisition training requirements for procurement and non-procurement personnel who are qualified and authorized to use the charge card for transactions **above** the micro-purchase threshold up to their warrant limits are described in the DOI Contracting Officers Warrant System (COWS) Manual, accessible at: <http://www.doi.gov/pam/cows.html>.

**B. I received purchase card training under the previous Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card Program. Do I have to take it again in order to receive purchase business line privileges under the current program?**

Individuals who received purchase card training and certification under the previous Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card (I.M.P.A.C.) Program are not required to repeat their initial training in micropurchases or simplified acquisition procedures related to purchase card use. However, they must complete the basic cardholder training/orientation described in the response to Question 2.3, above. In addition, the Department and bureaus/offices may require periodic refresher charge card training to remind and update cardholders concerning specific charge card requirements and procedures, and more recent regulatory changes.

### **3.2 Purchasing Authorities**

**To what levels is purchasing authority delegated under the purchase business line?**

**A. Micropurchases.** Bureau/office personnel without contracting officer warrants awarded under the DOI Contracting Officers Warrant System Manual may be authorized to use the charge card as a means of making and/or paying for micropurchases of supplies and services, i.e., purchases of up to \$2,500 for supplies and services except for construction. The micropurchase threshold for construction services is \$2,000.

As required by FAR 1.603-3(b), delegation of micropurchase authority to charge cardholders without contracting officer warrants is established in the EAGLS Account Set-up process, and is contained in the cardholder's personal account information featured in, and accessible through, EAGLS Inquiry options, i.e., Account Inquiry and Authorization Controls Inquiry options. Cardholder purchase business line accounts are established by authorized A/OPCs at levels determined either on a case-by-case or on a class basis by the Bureau Procurement Chief. The Bureau Procurement Chief's authority to establish dollar levels of cardholder purchase business line accounts within their respective bureau organization may be redelegated to a level not lower than that of the Chief of Contracting Office. Delegation of micropurchase authority to individuals, as identified in EAGLS accounting and authorization controls records, is contingent on the delegate's successful completion of training in micropurchase procedures associated with

charge card use prior to applying for a charge card in the purchase business line, and has certified in his or her charge card application; supervisory approval, as indicated on the prospective cardholder's application; compliance with the purchasing account levels determined by the Bureau Procurement Chief or Chief of Contracting Office; exercise of proper business practices including maintaining his or her charge account in good standing; and compliance with Federal and Departmental regulations, policy, and guidelines related to micropurchases and the integrated charge card program.

Termination of micropurchase authority associated with charge card use may be made for cause, e.g., card misuse, improper use of micropurchase authority, payment delinquencies, suspension or cancellation of other charge card business lines, or administrative reasons, e.g., lack of requirement for purchase authority at a new duty station. This delegation includes selected cardholders' authority to issue convenience checks.

**B. Simplified Acquisitions.** Bureau and office personnel with contracting officer's warrant authority delegated in accordance with the DOI Contracting Officers Warrant System Manual, are authorized to use the charge card as a means of making micropurchases (i.e., they may use the charge card as a procurement method for micropurchases), and to pay for purchases of supplies and services *above* the micropurchase level up to their open market warrant limit (i.e., they may use the charge card as a method of payment above the micropurchase threshold). They may also order up to the ordering limitations established for their respective warrant level in the Department of the Interior Contracting Officers Warrant Manual (see section entitled "Contracting Officers Warrant Levels") when placing delivery orders with established sources such as Federal Supply Schedules. This may be done, provided that the vendor's agreement with required terms and conditions for actions in excess of the micropurchase threshold is documented and supporting documentation (e.g., price comparisons, best value determinations, or other determinations,) is maintained by the contracting officer. Warranted contracting personnel are urged to "buy smart" and increase their buying power by using the charge card to place orders against established sources such as Federal Supply Schedules.

Extension of charge card purchase business line privileges to individuals with contracting officer's warrants is contingent on the exercise of proper business practices including maintaining his or her charge account in good standing, and compliance with Federal and Departmental acquisition regulations, policy, and guidelines. Termination of charge card privileges may be made for cause, e.g., charge card misuse, improper use of warrant authority, payment delinquencies, suspension or cancellation of other charge card business lines, or administrative reasons, e.g., lack of need for charge card authority in the purchase business line.

### **3.3 Requirements When Making Purchases**

#### **A. What procedural requirements apply to making purchases with the charge card?**

Federal, Department and bureau/office micropurchase and simplified acquisition regulations and procedures apply to all non-fleet and non-travel purchases made with the charge card.

Regardless of whether the purchase is made using oral, over-the-counter, or electronic procedures, the cardholder must:

1. Ensure that funds are available to pay for the items being purchased *prior* to making the actual purchase;
2. Check required sources' Internet sites or consult with the cognizant procurement office to determine if the items to be purchased are available from required sources of supply such as sheltered workshops (Javits-Wagner O'Day), Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR), or Federal Supply Schedules pursuant to FAR Part 8, and recycled products sources pursuant to FAR Part 23. (See response to Question 3.3.B. for further guidance regarding required sources.);
3. Distribute repeat buys equitably among qualified suppliers;
4. Verify that the quantity, quality, and prices of the items or services furnished by the vendor are in accordance with the sales agreement;
5. Notify the vendor that the purchase is tax exempt;
6. Strictly avoid splitting requirements to stay within the single micropurchase threshold or the single purchase limit of an individual cardholder. This includes making several purchases of identical items or components over a given period or making several individual purchases by multiple cardholders to avoid consolidating the requirements of an office or location into a larger procurement. Splitting requirements is expressly prohibited under the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 and its implementing regulations. Even if a cardholder or cardholders are making official purchases, this type of activity constitutes unauthorized charge card use and those responsible may be subject to cancellation of charge card privileges, suspension of delegated warrant authority, and/or other disciplinary action, as applicable;
7. Strictly avoid accepting vendor surcharges for their acceptance of charge card orders/payments. These dual-pricing types of surcharges should be disputed with the merchant, and the charge card contractor notified;

**NOTE: The following requirements only apply to cardholders with warrants under the DOI Contracting Officers Warrant System Manual:**

8. Reserve purchases *over* the micropurchase threshold for small business concerns in accordance with Public Law 95-507 (see FAR 13.003(b)); and
9. Solicit competition for purchases *over* the micropurchase threshold. Such competition must be obtained and documented pursuant to FAR requirements. (Remember, the charge card may be used as a procurement method for requirements under the micropurchase dollar threshold, and can only be used as a payment mechanism for requirements *over* the

micropurchase threshold, and to place orders and make payment under other contractual instruments when agreed to by the contractor.)

**B. In the response to Question 3.3.A, you mention “required sources” in item 3. Please provide further guidance on these sources and the requirements to buy from them.**

Regardless of the dollar value of a service or supply requirement or the procurement or payment method used (*including the charge card’s purchase business line*), except in cases of unusual and compelling urgency, the Federal Acquisition Regulation at section 8.001(a) requires Government agencies to satisfy requirements for supplies and services from or through the sources listed below in descending order. What that means is that regardless of whether a cardholder’s purchasing authority is limited to micropurchases or above, he or she must consult the following required sources *before* making any purchase from open market, commercial sources. Generally, if the product or service is available from a required source in/at the necessary quantity, delivery time frames, and prices, the cardholder must buy from that source. However, exceptions apply. Please access FAR Part 8 for further guidance regarding buying from required sources at <http://www.arnet.gov/far/> (click on the Parts 1 - 51 (HTML) button, then click on Part 8, “Required Sources of Supplies and Services”).

**1. If you have a requirement for SUPPLIES, you must satisfy the requirements from the sources listed below in descending order:**

- (a) Agency inventories;
- (b) Excess from other agencies;
- (c) Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (UNICOR). To check on UNICOR product offerings, access the UNICOR electronic catalog at: <http://www.unicor.gov>  
**[NOTE: If the required supply is available but you will not be acquiring it from UNICOR, you must request a waiver from UNICOR before proceeding with your purchase. Waivers can be obtained through the UNICOR web site (click on Waiver Request button).**
- (d) Products available from the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (JWOD). To check on the wide array of JWOD product offerings, access <http://www.jwod.com> **NOTE: JWOD products may also be purchased through GSA Advantage!, the Defense Logistics Agency, the Veterans Administration, and through the following vendors only by placing telephone orders at the specified telephone numbers:**

Boise Cascade Office Products	1-800-505-3337
BT Office Products Intl.	1-888-862-8674
Corporate Express	1-800-706-9267
Innovative Sales Brokers	1-800-283-1903
Office Depot	1-800-263-9586
Staples National Advantage	1-888-212-7219

If the needed supply item is available but you will not be purchasing it from JWOD, request a purchase exception from JWOD participating non-profit agency. (See FAR 8.706 for purchase exceptions.)

(e) Wholesale supply sources, e.g., stock programs of the General Services Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and military inventory control points. To check, access: GSA Advantage! on-line shopping at <http://www.gsaadvantage.gov>, the Defense Logistics Agency's DoD EMall (a major source for the purchase of re-refined oil) at <http://www.supply.dla.mil/> (click on EMall or Buying from DLA) or, for medical care products and medical equipment, the Department of Veterans Affairs at <http://www.va.gov/oa&mm/nac>.

(f) Mandatory Federal Supply Schedules. The number of mandatory FSS schedules is limited to travel in city pairs, express domestic small package delivery, and customized business cards. \*

(g) Optional Use Federal Supply Schedules. To check the broad array of optional FSS schedule coverage, access: <http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/schedules/> (click on the Schedules E Library button), or access GSA Advantage! on-line shopping at <http://www.gsaadvantage.gov>.

(h) Commercial, open market sources including educational and non-profit organizations.

\* **NOTE:** Prior to making any purchases from open market sources, make certain that no Departmental or bureau *mandatory or preferred source contracts* are already in place from which you must fill your requirement, e.g., multiple award contracts for narrowband radios, Official Penalty Mail Postage Meters, etc. If you have any questions, ask your servicing procurement office representative.

## **2. If you have a requirement for SERVICES, you must satisfy the requirements from the sources listed below in descending order:**

(a) Services available from the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (JWOD). To check on the services available through the JWOD Program, access: <http://www.jwod.gov> (click on the Products and Services button, and view or download the services list).

If the needed service item is available but you will not be acquiring through the Committee's List, request a Purchase Exception from the JWOD participating non-profit agency (See FAR 8.706 for exceptions.) DO NOT PROCEED with acquisition until exception is granted, as applicable.

(b) Mandatory Federal Supply Schedules. The number of mandatory FSS schedules is limited to travel in city pairs, express domestic small package delivery, and customized business cards.\*\*

(c) Optional Use Federal Supply Schedules. To check the broad array of services available through FSS schedules, access <http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/schedules/> (click on the Schedules E Library button).

(d) Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR) **OR** commercial, open market sources including educational and non-profit organizations. **NOTE: With regard to services, UNICOR and commercial sources (including educational and non-profit organizations) have equal priority.** To view services available from the UNICOR electronic catalog's schedule of products and services, access: <http://www.unicor.gov>.

**\*\* NOTE:** Prior to making any purchases from open market sources, make certain that no Departmental or bureau *mandatory or preferred source contracts* are already in place from which you must fill your service requirement. If you have any questions, ask your servicing procurement office representative.

### **C. Are there other Government- or Department-wide buying requirements that I should keep in mind?**

Yes, cardholders' full cooperation is needed in the purchase of recycled-content, environmentally preferable, and energy-efficient products, regardless of the source from which they may be making the purchase. This requirement applies when buying from required sources *and* from commercial, open market sources. As employees of an agency with an environmental stewardship mission, it is our duty to make more efficient use of natural resources through the acquisition of energy-efficient and environmentally preferable products, and those made with recovered materials. The good news is that an expanding assortment of high quality, reasonably priced environmentally preferable products is readily available from the required sources referenced above, e.g., JWOD, Defense Logistics Agency, UNICOR, GSA Advantage!.

Cardholders have the opportunity to help the environment while buying products that meet their programs' needs. To the extent practicable, they must buy products that are:

- (a) Made with recycled content;
- (b) Have less packaging;
- (c) Energy efficient;
- (d) Do not create hazardous waste; and
- (e) Incorporate other environmentally preferable attributes.

The Department's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance suggests the following:

(1) The Environmental Protection Agency designates recycled content products that agencies must buy, e.g., this applies to paper and paper products, non-paper office products, miscellaneous products such as pallets, construction products, landscaping products, park and recreation products, transportation products, e.g., traffic barricades and cones, vehicular products, e.g., engine coolants, re-refined motor oil, and retread tires. If you have a requirement in any of the above referenced categories, first check to see if they are EPA-designated recycled content products. For products that have been so designated, buy those meeting your delivery requirements, performance needs, and that are cost-competitive. Many of these products may be purchased through JWOD, GSA Advantage!, the Defense Logistics Agency, and UNICOR. EPA



also recommends the required minimum percentage of recycled content that the designated products should contain. This information can be accessed at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/cpg/products>.

(2) Packaging is a significant solid waste problem. We can reduce the amount of trash we generate by buying products with reduced packaging. For example, if you can purchase pads of paper that are not wrapped in plastic shrink wrap, you will not have to throw away the plastic. Also consider buying a larger quantity packaged in a single box rather than smaller quantities in multiple boxes.

(3) When buying products that use energy, e.g., computers, copiers, fax machines, multitasking devices, document scanners, audio-visual equipment, look for the **Energy Star** label, which tells you that the product is energy efficient. Access EPA's Energy Star products web site at:  
<http://www.energystar.gov/products> for further information.

(4) Before ordering, check to see if a product contains hazardous materials or toxic chemicals, e.g., batteries, cleaning products containing petroleum-based solvents or acids. The GSA's "Environmental Products Guide" contains information to help you choose environmentally preferable alternatives to these types of products (the guide and other helpful product information are available by accessing: <http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/enviro/>).

### **3.4 Convenience Checks**

#### **A. What are convenience checks? Are convenience checks available only to individuals with accounts in the purchase business line?**

A convenience check is a Bank of America-issued check that may be written on an approved cardholder *purchase* account within established dollar limits. (See section 1.3.L. for extended definition.)

Convenience checks are available at bureau discretion, in the purchase business line only. However, they are not necessarily available to *everyone* with an account in the purchase business line. This feature will only be available to select cardholders identified and trained by each bureau.

#### **B. When may convenience checks be used?**

Because of the fees associated with convenience check use, as well as Federal (31 CFR Part 208) and Departmental policy ( Financial Administration Memorandum 98-034, dated December 17, 1998), convenience checks may *only* be used where charge cards are *not* accepted by a merchant, for emergencies related to fire fighting and rescue, and for other approved purposes that comply with the Debt Collection Improvement Act (see Department of the Interior Acquisition Policy Release 1999-7, dated May 18, 1999, and Department of the Interior Financial Administration Memorandum No. 98-034, dated December 17, 1998).

The limitations on the use of convenience checks are necessary because the Department of the Treasury has ruled that convenience checks (like other checks) are not Electronic Funds Transfer compliant, i.e., the Debt Collection Improvement Act requires, with limited exceptions, that Federal payments be made through electronic means.

**C. When must convenience checks not be used?**

In addition to the situation described in the response to Question 3.4.B, above (i.e., you cannot use convenience checks if the vendor accepts MasterCard charge cards), and the Federal or Departmental purchase charge card prohibitions identified in sections 2.2. E and F of this guideline, convenience checks must not be used by individuals to write checks to themselves, to any other individual or vendors for:

1. Cash advance purposes;
2. Salary payment, cash awards, or any transaction required to be processed through the payroll system;
3. Employee reimbursements;
4. Travel related transportation tickets;
5. Meals, and lodging related to employee travel; or
6. Rental or lease of vehicles when in travel status.

Only as a *last resort with merchants that do not accept the MasterCard charge card* and in accordance with bureau policy may a convenience check be used for:

7. Purchase of telephone services;
8. Repairs for GSA vehicles; or
9. Fuel or oil for vehicles.

**D. What other procedures or restrictions apply?**

All regulations, policies, special requirements, and approvals that apply to micropurchases and simplified acquisition must be followed when using convenience checks. Bureaus may implement further limitations/restrictions to convenience check use in their respective convenience check programs and policies.

In addition, Internal Revenue Service Form 1099, Miscellaneous Income, and Taxpayer Identification Number reporting requirements apply to convenience check transactions. Convenience check users must consult with their respective bureau charge card guideline supplement for specific procedures regarding implementation of these mandatory reporting requirements.

### **3.5 Property Issues**

#### **Do special or different property requirements apply for property purchased or paid for through use of the charge card or convenience checks?**

No, property purchased or paid for with the charge card is subject to the same Federal, Departmental, and bureau property reporting requirements that property purchased through other acquisition or payment mechanisms.

All non-expendable personal property items purchased and paid for using the charge card or convenience checks must be reported to the appropriate bureau/office property officer for appropriate government identification markings, and as appropriate, inclusion in the property accountability system, in accordance with bureau/office property reporting requirements.

### **3.6 Review of Charge Card Purchase Transaction Records**

#### **What are bureau/office responsibilities regarding review of purchase cardholder accounts?**

To ensure proper use of the charge cards by bureau personnel, bureaus shall establish processes, procedures, frequency, and schedules for the review of purchase transactions. In case of questions regarding particular transactions, EAGLS information should be supplemented by review of transaction receipts (see section 2.8.A for turnaround time related to requests for receipts for audit or review). Reviews shall also include an examination of cardholder timeliness in reporting statement of account errors and discrepancies, and payment delinquencies. Reviewers shall submit a copy of their findings to appropriate bureau/office officials in accordance with bureau procedures.

As part of their delegations of micropurchase and contracting authority, and in keeping with proper business practices, employees with procurement/payment authority in the purchase business line are responsible for timely verification of the accuracy and validity of all expenses posted to their charge accounts. Errors and discrepancies should be promptly identified and disputed, as appropriate.

**\*\*\*\*\* End Chapter 3 \*\*\*\*\***

## **Chapter 4 Charge Card Guidance and Procedures Specific to the Fleet Business Line**

### **4.1 General**

- A. For what kinds of requirements must the fleet charge card be used?
- B. Like the purchase and travel cards, can the fleet card only be issued to individuals?
- C. Who in a bureau is responsible for card distribution, record maintenance, and establishment of transaction dollar limits for the fleet charge card line?
- D. What kind of fleet reporting requirements apply to the fleet business line?

### **4.2 Control of Fleet Charge Cards**

- A. If a fleet card account can be assigned to a vehicle or equipment, how will this be reflected on the charge card itself?
- B. Does every individual piece of equipment, especially smaller motorized equipment, require that a fleet charge card be maintained for it?

### **4.3 Re-Refined Oil and Other Environmentally Preferable Products**

- A. In section 3.3.C above, you covered the requirements to buy environmentally preferable products including retread tires and re-refined oil. Do these same requirements apply to cardholders under the fleet business line?
- B. How can I obtain re-refined engine lubricating oil and other environmentally preferable vehicular products?

\*\*\*\*\*

### **4.1 General**

#### **A. For what kinds of requirements must the fleet charge card be used?**

Bureaus must use the fleet business line or the fleet charge card for obtaining authorized fuel, oil, supplies/parts, service and repairs for motor vehicles, equipment, boats and small airplanes, owned or leased by DOI. However, see restriction in section 2.2.C of this guideline regarding fuel, oil, supplies/parts, service and repairs for vehicles in the GSA Interagency Fleet Management System.

#### **B. Like the purchase and travel cards, can the fleet card only be issued to individuals?**

No, the fleet charge card may be issued to an individual, a vehicle, or to equipment. The fleet business line may be integrated in one card with travel and/or purchase authority.

#### **C. Who in a bureau is responsible for card distribution, record maintenance, and establishment of transaction dollar limits for the fleet charge card line?**

A/OPCs are responsible for card distribution, record maintenance in EAGLS, and establishment of transaction dollar limits for the fleet charge card line.

#### **D. What kind of fleet reporting requirements apply to the fleet business line?**

1. Use of fleet management system vehicles must be recorded and reported in accordance with instructions issued by GSA Fleet Management Centers.
2. Bureaus must use the charge card system to capture data required for the Agency Motor Vehicle Report, Standard Form 82, and Executive Order 13031, "Federal Alternative-Fueled Vehicle Leadership."
3. Information that must be provided by the driver at the automated fueling point of sale will be decided by bureau/office fleet managers in coordination with the A/OPC and Bank of America. This decision should be based in part upon external reporting requirement data collection needs.

#### **4.2 Control of Fleet Charge Cards**

##### **A. If a fleet card account can be assigned to a vehicle or equipment, how will this be reflected on the charge card itself?**

When a charge card is assigned to a specific vehicle, major piece of equipment, boat or aircraft, the license plate number or property number will be embossed on the charge card so that all supply and service transactions charged with that card will be assigned to that vehicle or equipment. Bureau managers must ensure the charge card is used to solely purchase fuel and services for the vehicle identified by the tag number on the card.

##### **B. Does every individual piece of equipment, especially smaller motorized equipment, require that a fleet charge card be maintained for it?**

No, it is not necessary to maintain separate charge cards for individual items of small motorized equipment, e.g., lawn mowers, chain saws, hand tractors, compressors. One charge card may be used to obtain fuel, lubricants and other supplies for such equipment. In these instances, bureau/office or local procedures shall be established to issue charge cards for this equipment, prevent unauthorized use, and ensure controlled use of the charge cards.

#### **4.3 Re-Refined Oil and Other Environmentally Preferable Products**

##### **A. In section 3.3.C above, you covered the requirements to buy environmentally preferable products including retread tires and re-refined oil. Do these same requirements apply to cardholders under the fleet business line?**

Yes they do. In the case of re-refined oil, using re-refined oil saves energy. For every two quarts of re-refined oil used, 42 gallons of crude oil use is avoided. The process of re-refining those two quarts takes half as much energy as is required for refining virgin oil from crude. These energy savings equate to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Department of the Interior is committed to the use of environmentally preferable products, including re-refined oil. Furthermore, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act requires federal agencies to acquire products composed of the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable, unless a determination is made that the products are not reasonably available within a certain period of time, the products fail to meet applicable performance standards, or that the products are only available at an unreasonable price. In many cases, re-refined oil and other environmentally preferable products actually cost less or are well within the price range of products with non-recycled content.

**B. How can I obtain re-refined engine lubricating oil and other environmentally preferable vehicular products?**

Several sources of supply are available. For example, the Defense Logistics Agency - Defense Supply Center Richmond (DLA-DSCR) sells several grades of commercial and heavy-duty re-refined oil that have been tested and meet the American Petroleum Institute's performance classifications and viscosity grades. To find out more, or to place an order over the Internet using your charge card, access the DLA-DSCR web site at:

<http://www.dscr.dla.mil/products/pol/polintro.htm>

DLA-DSCR also accepts telephone orders at 1-800-345-6333.

In addition, for information regarding retread tires and other fleet related environmentally preferable products, access the GSA's Environmental Programs web site at:

<http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/enviro/>

**\*\*\*\*\* End Chapter 4 \*\*\*\*\***

## **Chapter 5 Charge Card Guidance and Procedures Specific to the Travel Business Line**

### **5.1 Applicable Regulations and Policy**

In addition to the rules and procedures covered in these guidelines, what regulations and guidance apply to charge card transactions under the travel business line?

### **5.2 Mandatory Charge Card Use for Travel, Charge Card Eligibility, Mandatory Use Policy Exemptions, and Applicability to Permanent Change of Duty Travel**

A. May I use my personal charge card to pay for my official travel expenses?

B. May exemptions to the mandatory charge card use policy be granted? If so, who may grant them, and what procedures apply?

C. In the Note following your response to Question 5.2.B, above, you mentioned that the Administrator, GSA has issued a class waiver to the mandatory use policy for agency-issued charge cards. What types of travel expenses and/or classes of employees are covered under the GSA class exemption?

D. Can the charge card (travel business line) be used for permanent change of duty station (PCS) expenses?

### **5.3 “Corporate” Accounts for Transportation Tickets (Travel Business Line) and Limited Use/Limited Line Cards**

A. What is a “corporate” account? What can it be used for?

B. With regard to travel, what is the difference between a limited line card and a limited use card?

### **5.4 Travel Advances/Automated Teller Machines (ATM)**

A. What are the guidelines and limits for ATM cash/travel advances?

B. What ATM fees and terminal access fees will I be charged?

C. What if a cardholder cannot be issued an ATM advance?

### **5.5 Review of Travel in EAGLS**

A. What are a cardholder’s responsibilities regarding review of his or her travel charge card account?

B. To help me in my account review, what kinds of travel expenses are centrally billed?

### **5.6 Maintaining Receipts and Documentation**

What documentation must a cardholder provide to be reimbursed for travel expenses?

### **5.7 Filing Travel Vouchers and Notification to Traveler of Improper Voucher Submission**

A. When must an employee file his or her travel voucher?

B. What procedures apply if the voucher is incorrectly prepared or incomplete?

### **5.8 Late Payment Fees by Finance Office to Traveler**

Is the traveler entitled to receive late payment fees from the Finance Office if payment is late?

\*\*\*\*\*

## **5.1 Applicable Regulations and Policy**

**In addition to the rules and procedures covered in these guidelines, what regulations and guidance apply to charge card transactions under the travel business line?**

Charge card transactions under the travel business line must comply with the Federal Travel Regulation (41 CFR 301-51) and its Departmental implementation policies and procedures issued separately from this document through Financial Administration Memoranda. Access the Office of Financial Management's Financial Administration Memoranda at:  
<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/policy.html>

When using the Government charge card for travel, employees are expected to handle the card sensibly, maintaining it in their possession or in a place of safekeeping, keeping their accounts in good standing, and exercise good judgment in its use at all times. If an employee incurs charges which are not reimbursable by the Department, the employee is personally responsible for payment of all such charges.

**NOTE:** None of the features of the travel business line, e.g., ATM cash advances, restaurant charges, may be used independently of authorized travel.

## **5.2. Mandatory Charge Card Use for Travel, Charge Card Eligibility, Mandatory Use Policy Exemptions, and Applicability to Permanent Change of Duty Travel**

### **A. May I use my personal charge card to pay for my official travel expenses?**

With limited exceptions as covered in sections 5.2. B and C, below, and certain exceptions related to permanent change of duty station (PCS) travel you may not use your personal charge card to pay for your official travel expenses. (Contact your servicing finance office or access <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html> for further information concerning relocation travel). The Federal Travel Regulation (41 CFR 301-51) requires use of the Government-sponsored contractor-issued charge card, i.e., within DOI, the Bank of America MasterCard, by employees for official travel unless an exemption has been granted. Therefore, as DOI employees, we are required to use the DOI-sponsored Bank of America MasterCard to pay for reimbursable transportation and other travel-related expenses incurred while on official travel.

U.S. Department of the Interior policy requires employees who are expected to travel on official business to obtain the DOI-Bank of America MasterCard within 30 days of their appointment to a DOI bureau/office. Employees who carry delinquent account balances from a previous travel charge card will be required to satisfy their existing obligation before a new card will be issued.

Employees who receive a travel card are required to use the card for the purchase of transportation tickets, lodging, and car rental expenses to conduct official travel, unless the card is not accepted by merchants or an exemption has been granted. Transportation tickets for official



travel may only be purchased from: (1) the DOI's selected travel agency under GSA/DOI contract, i.e., the DOI's designated Travel Management Center; or (2) in the case of airline tickets, directly from an airline company.

The travel charge card should also be used whenever practicable for any other official travel expenses such as meals, taxis, parking.

Individuals working for the Department of the Interior and its bureaus/offices under Interagency Personnel Actions and employees on detail from other Federal Government agencies may be issued Bank of America - DOI charge cards in the *travel* business line subject to any limitations deemed appropriate by the DOI bureau/office. In doing so, DOI bureaus and offices must ensure that the cards are canceled upon expiration of the detail period.

**B. May exemptions to the mandatory charge card use policy be granted? If so, who may grant them, and what procedures apply?**

Within DOI, Program Assistant Secretaries are delegated authority to grant exemptions to the mandatory charge card use policy, as deemed necessary and justified. This authority cannot be re-delegated. Requests for exemption by employees within the Offices of the Secretary and the Solicitor must be submitted to the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget. The Inspector General will approve exemptions to the mandatory use policy for OIG employees. All requests for exemption must be submitted in writing to the appropriate Assistant Secretary/IG. Copies of approved exemptions will be sent by the requestor's office to the DOI Office of Financial Management. As required by the Federal Travel Regulation, the Office of Financial Management will report all exemptions granted by the Department to the General Services Administration within 30 days.

**NOTE: The above exemption requirement *does not apply* to the travel related supplies, services, and employee categories identified in section 5.2.C, below. The Administrator of General Services has already issued a Governmentwide mandatory charge card use exemption for these categories as stated in 41 CFR 301-51.2.**

**C. In the Note following your response to Question 5.2.B, above, you mentioned that the Administrator, GSA, has issued a class waiver to the mandatory use policy for agency-sponsored charge cards. What types of travel expenses and/or classes of employees are covered under the GSA class exemption?**

As stated in section 301-51.2 of the Federal Travel Regulation (41 CFR 301-51.2), the Administrator of General Services exempts on a Governmentwide basis, the following from the **mandatory** charge card use for travel policy, i.e., DOI cardholders/prospective travelers **do not** have to submit requests for exemption (as described in the response to Question 5.2.B, above), from the Department's mandatory charge card policy for travel for the following goods/services or when used by the classes of employees identified below :

## **1. Goods/Services Covered by the GSA Governmentwide Exemption**

- (a) Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the DOI-Bank of America MasterCard;
- (b) Laundry/dry cleaning;
- (c) Parking;
- (d) Local transportation systems;
- (e) Taxi;
- (f) Tips;
- (g) Meals (when use of the card is impractical, e.g., group meals or if Bank of America MasterCard is not accepted);
- (h) Phone calls (when a Government calling card is available for use in accordance with DOI policy);

## **2. Classes of Employees Covered by the GSA Governmentwide Exemption**

- (a) An employee who has an application pending for the travel charge card;
- (b) Individuals traveling on invitational travel, including interviewees; and
- (c) New appointees.

**NOTE:** This does **not** mean that cardholders cannot use their Bank of America MasterCard to pay for any of the travel related goods or services listed above. If Bank of America's MasterCard is accepted for any of the goods/services, DOI cardholders are expected to use it.

### **D. Can the charge card (travel business line) be used for permanent change of duty station (PCS) expenses?**

Yes, the charge card (travel business line) may and should be used for PCS travel whenever possible. However, certain exceptions and restrictions apply, e.g., there is a restriction on using it for purchase of gasoline during PCS travel, since the employee will be reimbursed mileage for the travel on a PCS. Contact your servicing finance office for further information or access <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html> regarding relocation travel.

## **5.3 "Corporate" Accounts for Transportation Tickets (Travel Business Line) and Limited Use/Limited Line Cards**

### **A. What is a "corporate" account? What can it be used for?**

On occasion, bureaus and offices may have a need to purchase transportation tickets for individuals who do not have a travel business line account, e.g., interviewees, invitational travelers, and employees serving without an appointment. (See definition for "corporate" account in section 1.3 M.) As a means of purchasing transportation tickets for individuals qualifying for the GSA contract city-pair rates, bureaus/offices and programs may open a "corporate" account for this purpose. Please Note: A "corporate" account is not a particular type of charge card, rather it is an established account against which transportation ticket charges may be assessed.

Bureaus/offices may choose one of two structures for establishing and managing this type of account.

1. The account may be opened in the name of an organization, with a specific individual designated as responsible for managing and reconciling the account; or
2. The account may be opened in the name of the individual responsible for managing and reconciling it. That individual must use a separate charge card account for transportation and expenses related to his or her own official travel.

Although authorized by this guidance, this account shall be used carefully and sparingly. In no case may it be used more than one time in a year for travel for an employee who is both eligible and has supervisory approval to receive a Bank of America MasterCard.

Corporate accounts must be used only for purchasing transportation tickets. Travel expenses of contractors and subsistence expenses (lodging and Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) may not be charged to a corporate account. Each charge against a corporate account must be authorized in writing by the individual responsible for managing and reconciling the account. Transportation ticket purchases made through this account must comply with all applicable portions of the Federal Travel Regulations. All transactions will be centrally billed. Bureau/office A/OPCs must review all transactions for this type of account(s) within their hierarchy monthly to ensure that the account is used only for its intended purpose.

**B. With regard to travel, what is the difference between a limited line card and a limited use card?**

A limited line card will have a credit limit set at the level needed to cover a specific trip or trips. A limited use card may be activated only for periods of official travel. (See also definitions in section 1.3.) Limited use cards may also be authorized for use for a period of time pending charge card privilege reinstatement for cardholders whose charge card privileges have been canceled for misuse or account delinquency. Limited use cards may have restricted credit limits or other restrictions, such as no cash access, as appropriate for the individual circumstances. Please refer to bureau/office policy for further information on availability of limited line and limited use cards.

**5.4 Travel Advances/Automated Teller Machines (ATM)**

**A. What are the guidelines and limits for ATM cash/travel advances?**

ATM privileges are restricted to the travel business line and may only be used to obtain limited cash advances for official travel expenses while on official travel or not more than five calendar days prior to the beginning date of official travel. ATM withdrawals must *not* be made *independent* of authorized, official travel. *Unless the traveler has received advance authorization allowing for travel reimbursement on an “actual expense” basis*, ATM cash advances must not

exceed the expected local allowance for Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE), including expected, reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses which may not be chargeable on a card, e.g., local transportation. ATM terminal fees and Bank of America fees are reimbursable up to the maximum authorized travel advance.

**B. What ATM fees and terminal access fees will I be charged?**

ATM fees are 1.9% of the total amount withdrawn. ATM withdrawals from a Bank of America branch will not incur an additional terminal access fee. ATM withdrawals from other institutions may incur a terminal access fee. Travelers can easily locate the Bank of America ATM nearest them or their point of travel, by calling 1-800-472-1424 or on the Internet at the following URL: <http://www.bankofamerica.com/government> (click on “Locate Us” and then “ATM Locator”).

Both ATM fees and terminal access fees are reimbursable on the cardholder’s travel voucher.

**C. What if a cardholder cannot be issued an ATM advance?**

If an ATM advance cannot be issued, a Government advance must be requested. An amount equal to the M&IE for the trip can be deposited electronically (DD/EFT) into an employee’s checking, savings, or other designated account. Imprest fund cash advances were eliminated after January 1, 1999, in accordance with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. NOTE: As indicated in section 3.4.C of these guidelines, convenience checks may not be used to provide cash advances.

## **5.5 Review of Travel in EAGLS**

**A. What are a cardholder’s responsibilities regarding review of his or her travel charge card account?**

Cardholders are responsible for verifying the accuracy and validity of *all* expenses posted to their travel accounts, the individually billed actions, for which they are responsible for payment, as well as expenses that are centrally billed (designated by an “M” or “Memo Item”), payable by the Government. They must promptly identify errors and discrepancies, and dispute them. Employees must routinely review their account statements to ensure that improper charges are not billed to individual or central accounts. In addition to monthly statements of account, EAGLS is an available electronic review tool.

**B. To help me in my account review, what kinds of travel expenses are centrally billed?**

Generally, transportation tickets, TMC transaction fees, rental cars, shuttle bus fees, parking fees, and fuel for rental cars are centrally rather than individually billed. Under its pilot program, the Bureau of Reclamation’s lodging costs are also centrally billed transactions. As indicated above, centrally billed items are designated by an “M” or “Memo Item” on the monthly Statement of Account.

## 5.6 Maintaining Receipts and Documentation

### What documentation must a cardholder provide to be reimbursed for travel expenses?

All authorized travelers are required to document claimed reimbursable expenses on a travel voucher. The voucher must identify the amounts, date and purpose of expenditures. Memo Item or “M” entries must be listed on the travel voucher to itemize all centrally billed charges. However, a cardholder **may not** claim reimbursement for *centrally billed* charges.

Receipts must be provided for all expenses over \$75.00 and for all reimbursable lodging, and commercial transportation expenses regardless of the amount. When available, *original* receipts should be attached to the employee’s travel voucher, irrespective of whether an item is centrally billed or individually billed.

Employees should consult their respective bureau/office Finance Office for any additional requirements associated with the preparation or review of travel vouchers, and their respective A/OPC or sub-coordinator regarding bureau/office specific requirements related to use of the card for travel.

## 5.7 Filing Travel Vouchers, and Notification to Traveler of Improper Voucher Submission

### A. When must an employee file his or her travel voucher?

An employee must prepare and submit his or her travel voucher to their supervisor (or other designated official) within five work days after completion of travel, 30-day segment of extended temporary duty travel, or segment of permanent change of station move.

### B. What procedures apply if the voucher is incorrectly prepared or incomplete?

Upon submission of a travel voucher, designated approving officials and employees must do the following:

1. If the voucher is incomplete or improper, the designated approving official must return it to the employee for correction. This must be done within 7 calendar days of receipt in the designated approving official’s office;
2. The employee must correct/complete the travel voucher and resubmit it to his or her designated approving official *with a current signature date*, i.e., the date the correction was made;

Upon receipt of the corrected/completed voucher in the designated approving official’s office, the “clock” for late payment is re-set to zero, i.e., the “clock” starts all over again.

3. The employee’s designated approving official must submit the voucher to the respective finance office for review/audit and for payment. Because travelers must be reimbursed for travel

within 30 days, designated approving officials must sign properly completed travel vouchers within 1 to 2 days of receipt.

## **5.8 Late Payment Fees by Finance Office to Traveler**

### **Is a traveler entitled to receive late payment fees from the finance office if payment is late?**

Yes, a traveler is entitled to a late payment penalty if his or her travel claim is not reimbursed within 30 days after receipt in the designated approving office. *In addition* to the late payment penalty, a traveler is entitled to receive reimbursement for any late payment fees that are or could have been assessed by Bank of America because of the late payment. Travelers are not entitled to late payment fees *unless* the fees are assessed solely because the bureau/office was late reimbursing the travel claim.

**\*\*\*\*\* End Chapter 5 \*\*\*\*\***

**ISSUE DATE: MAY 22, 2000**

**Charge Card Program References**

Additional guidance related to charge card use is set forth in the following:

1. Treasury Financial Manual (TFM) 4-4500
2. The FSS contract for the SmartPay Program and the GSA Fleet, Travel and Purchase Payment System Program Guide
3. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Parts 4, 8, 13, and 23
4. Department of the Interior Acquisition Regulation (DIAR) Parts 1401 and 1413
5. Individual bureau acquisition, property management, and finance policy supplements
6. Department of the Interior MasterCard Integrated Card Program Agency/Organization Program Coordinator Training Guide
7. Contracting Officers Warrant System Manual, dated February 11, 1997
8. Federal Travel Regulation (41 CFR 301-51)
9. 410 DM 114-26, GSA Procurement Programs, Interior Property Management Directives
10. 41 CFR, Chapter 101, Federal Property Management Regulations
11. Government Printing and Binding Regulations, Government Printing Office
12. The MasterCard Government Card Guide to Benefits
13. Bank of America Cardholder Agreement
14. Bank of America MasterCard Integrated Card Program Cardholder Program Guide
15. DOI Office of Financial Management Financial Administration Memoranda (<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/policy.html>)

**Helpful Internet Sites and Bank of America General Contact Information**

**Required and Environmentally Preferable Product Sources**

Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program (FAR Part 8 Required Source): <http://www.jwod.gov> (for general information and specific information on services provided) and <http://www.jwod.com> (for direct ordering and supply information)

Defense Logistics Agency (to order re-refined engine lubricating oil): <http://www.supply.dla.mil> (Click on "E-Mall"), or Defense Logistics Agency - Defense Supply Center Richmond: <http://www.dscr.dla.mil/products/pol/polintro.htm>

Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (UNICOR) (electronic catalog of product offerings, direct ordering, and waiver requests): <http://www.unicor.gov>

GSA Advantage (on-line shopping from GSA schedule items): <http://www.gsaadvantage.gov>

**DOI Policy Sites**

DOI Office of Financial Management (Financial Policy): <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/policy.html>

DOI Office of Acquisition and Property Management's Integrated Charge Card Program web site: <http://www.doi.gov/pam/charge.html>

**Bank of America General Contact Information**

Bank of America

Customer Service: 1-800-472-1424

Outside of the United States, call collect: 1-757-441-4124

Relay Center Services for Individuals with Hearing or Speech Disabilities: 1-800-672-0779

FAX Number: 1-757-624-6323

Mailing Address:

Bank of America

Government Card Services Unit (GCSU)

P. O. Box 1637

Norfolk, VA 23501



**Exhibit I****GENERAL GUIDE TO CHARGE CARD USE BY BUSINESS LINE**

(See section 2.2, "Limitations/Restrictions" for additional guidance.)

(The following coverage is general in nature, exceptions may apply.)

<b>Category</b>	<b>Travel</b>	<b>Purchase</b>	<b>Fleet</b>
Cash Advances	Yes	No	No
Airline, bus, train, and other travel tickets	Yes	No	No
Lodging and M&IE expenses	Yes	No	No
Vehicle Rental/Lease	Yes	Yes (1)	Yes
Vehicle Repairs/Service	No	Yes (3)	Yes (3)
Building/Land/Lease	No	Yes (1)	No
Fuel/oil for vehicles	Yes (2)	No	Yes (4)
Telecommunications equipment	No	Yes (1)	No
Convenience Checks	No	Yes	No

(1) With limitations

(2) Only for a commercial rental vehicle

(3) Except for GSA Interagency Fleet Management System (IFMS) vehicles with wet or semi-dry rate

(4) Except for GSA IFMS vehicles with a wet rate.